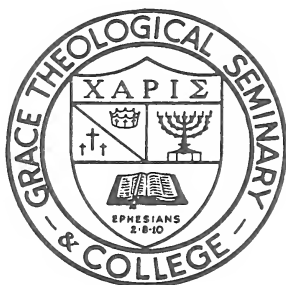


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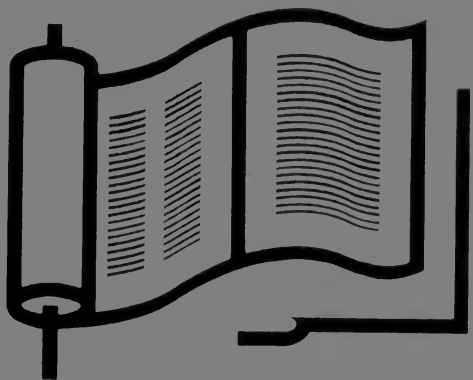
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THE CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJUNCTIVES: A STATISTICAL STUDY*

JAMES L. BOYER

Besides providing statistical information not easily available elsewhere and offering supporting elements within each classified use, this study seeks to explore two related subjects which are clarified by this inductive study. They are (1) the parallel between the $\tilde{\nu}\alpha$ + subjunctive construction and the infinitive, and (2) the occurrence of future indicatives in many instances where aorist subjunctives might have appeared. Both of these are significant to the exegete.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

IT is not within the intended scope of this article to deal with the theoretical question of the primary significance of the subjunctive mood or with the question of its historical origin and development. I begin with the basic understanding that the subjunctive mood expresses some doubtfulness, contingency, or uncertainty by reason of futurity. My purpose is to classify the various constructions in which

*Informational materials and listings generated in the preparation of this study may be found in my "Supplemental Manual of Information: Subjunctive Verbs." Those interested may secure this manual through their local library by interlibrary loan from the Morgan Library, Grace Theological Seminary, 200 Seminary Dr., Winona Lake, IN 46590. Also available is "Supplemental Manual of Information: Infinitive Verbs." This augments my article "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 6 (1985) 3-27. I plan to prepare other supplemental manuals as time permits, beginning with one on participles.

This study is one of several published in *GTJ* on related aspects of the grammar of the Greek NT: (1) "Project Gramcord: A Report" (1 [1980] 97-99); (2) "First Class Conditions: What Do They Mean?" (2 [1981] 75-114); (3) "Second Class Conditions in New Testament Greek" (3 [1982] 81-88); (4) "Third (and Fourth) Class Conditions" (3 [1982] 163-75); (5) "Other Conditional Elements in New Testament Greek" (4 [1983] 173-88); (6) "The Classification of Participles: A Statistical Study" (5 [1984] 163-79); and (7) "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study" (6 [1985] 3-27).

the subjunctive appears in the Greek NT, providing statistical information about these structures in general, and about many of the elements which appear in them. The system of classification is the traditional one found in most grammars.

THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

Hortatory Subjunctive

Usually named first of these independent or main verb uses of the subjunctive is the hortatory subjunctive, in which "the speaker is exhorting others to join him in the doing of an action,"¹ as in 1 John 4:7: Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους / 'Beloved, let us love one another'.² Thus it serves to supply the deficiency of the imperative mood which like English has no first person forms.³ It is almost always in the plural (66 of 69 occurrences); the three exceptions seem to express a slightly different sense. Rather than an exhortation addressed to self there is an invitation to someone else to permit the speaker to do something, as in Luke 6:42 (= Matt 7:4); Ἀδελφέ, ἄφες ἐκβάλλω τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σου / 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye'. The other example of a first person singular is Acts 7:34, with similar meaning.

The example just given also illustrates another frequent characteristic of the hortatory subjunctive: the use of an introductory imperatival word immediately before the subjunctive. The words so used in the NT (and their frequencies) are ἄφες (3), ἄφετε (1), δεῦτε (3), and δεῦρο (1).⁴ The first two are aorist imperatives but function as mere hortatory particles. The last two are adverbial particles, with the ending inflected as if to show their imperatival nature. All four function elsewhere as equivalents of a full imperative.⁵

Deliberative Subjunctive

The subjunctive is also used in deliberative questions, in which a person asks himself or another what he is to do,⁶ as in Matt 6:31 τί

¹H. P. V. Nunn, *A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1951) 82.

²Unless stated otherwise the translation of biblical examples is from *NASB*.

³A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 93.

⁴This usage also characterized this construction in classical Greek, using ἄγε, φέρε, or δεῦρο. It continues in modern Greek in ἄς (shortened from ἄφες).

⁵BAGD, 125, 176.

⁶Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, vol. 3 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* by J. H. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963) 98.

φάγωμεν / 'What shall we eat?' Not all examples are deliberative, however, and BDF expands the title to "the Doubtful [Dubitative] or Deliberative Subjunctive"⁷ (cf. Matt 23:33: πῶς φύγητε; / 'How shall you escape?'). The use of the subjunctive in these sentences points to the doubtful, hesitating quality of subjective consideration.

Normally questions in the subjunctive use first person, singular or plural (57 of 102), but when these questions are quoted indirectly the first person may change to second or third. Even beyond this there are a few instances where the deliberation is not with one's self, but advice is being asked from another party. Mark 6:24 (τί αἰτήσονται; / 'What shall I ask for?') does not mean that Herodias is deliberating with herself—rather she is asking her mother's advice. Matt 27:22 is a similar case.

These may be simple questions or introduced by an interrogative pronoun or adverb, such as τί (54), τίς (1), πῶς (18), ποῦ (6), ὅπου (2), πόθεν (1), and ποῖος (1). Five times the indirect question is preceded by the substantivizing article.

The deliberative question (as the hortatory subjunctive) may be preceded by an introductory word, i.e., θέλεις, θέλετε, or βούλεσθε (as in classical). If these are thought of as proper verbs the subjunctive clause then would be an object clause replacing the frequent infinitive object. But the absence of a conjunction and the parallel with the introductory hortatory particles make it at least possible to consider these as compressed, deliberative, double questions, as in Matt 20:32 τί θέλετε ποιήσω ὑμῖν / 'What do you want? What shall I do for you?'⁸ (In 1 Cor 4:21 the editors of the *UBSGNT* even punctuate the sentence as two questions.)

There are other ways to express the deliberative question. (1) The future indicative is used, as in Luke 22:49; Rom 3:5; 4:1; 9:14. In Luke 11:5 the future indicative is used first, followed by two subjunctives, each connected with the future indicative by καί. (2) Even the present indicative is used, as in John 11:45. (3) A paraphrastic construction using δεῖ or δύναμαι plus an infinitive may also be used, as in Matt 12:34; Acts 16:30.

Aorist Prohibition

Strange as it may seem to the beginning Greek student, the use of the subjunctive instead of the imperative in aorist prohibitions is native to Greek from earliest times. Robertson says, "It seems clear

⁷BDF, 185.

⁸My translation; *NASB* renders this subjunctive as if it were an infinitive object clause: 'What do you wish me to do for you?'

that originally both in Sanskrit and Greek prohibition was expressed only by the subj. Hence the growth of the imperative never finally displaced it.”⁹ In the NT as in classical Greek these negative commands are almost always in the subjunctive mood when they use the aorist tense. The exceptions are few¹⁰ and there seems to be no clear difference in sense. All of them are third person, but there are also 6 examples where third person aorist prohibitions are in the subjunctive mood.

Since these subjunctives are substitutes for the imperative, a consideration of them will be included in a later study of that mood. Here it may be sufficient to point out that they sometimes occur with an introductory ὅρα or ὅρατε, as in classical and parallel to introductory words with hortatory and deliberative subjunctives. The prohibition is introduced by μή or one of its compounds.

Emphatic Future Negation

The sense of this construction is clear; the most emphatic way to say that something shall not happen in the future is to use οὐ μή with the subjunctive mood. But it is not so clear by what process this construction arose, nor why it means what it does. The subjunctive does not naturally express such certainty, and the doubling of the simple negative might seem to make an affirmative, but the case is not so simple. The grammarians review the theories with varying conclusions.¹¹ I prefer to think of it as a form of litotes; i.e., the second negative (μή) negates the subjunctive verb and together they express a doubtful idea; the first negative (οὐ) negates the doubtful clause introduced by μή. As a whole the clause communicates that “there is no doubt about it; it is not an uncertain matter.”

The first negative in two instances is a strengthened form of οὐ (οὐχί, Luke 18:30; οὐδέ, Rev 7:16); in two it is preceded by a doubling οὐδέ (Luke 10:19; Heb 13:4).

This category of subjunctive use is not limited to the independent or main clause classification. It may appear anywhere an indicative might appear, in ὅτι substantive clauses (11), in relative clauses (9), or in object clauses (1). In Mark 13:2 it occurs both in the main clause and in the subordinate relative clause.

⁹Robertson, *Grammar*, 841.

¹⁰There are 8 aorist imperatives with μή as compared with 88 subjunctives. One is in Matt 6:3; the other 7 are in 3 parallel passages of the synoptic gospels, Matt 24:17–18 = Mark 13:15–16 = Luke 17:31.

¹¹Cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, 929; J. H. Moulton, *Prolegomena*, vol. I of *A Grammar of NT Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906) 188ff.

Not strictly within the present scope of study but closely related to a major item to be dealt with later is the occurrence of this construction with the future indicative instead of the subjunctive.¹²

Doubtful Assertion or Cautious Statement

Is the subjunctive ever used in the New Testament to express doubtful assertion—what we express in English by “I may do it”? It would seem to be a natural sense, but the answer is not clear. Classical Greek grammars speak of such a use; for example, “the present subjunctive with μή may express a doubtful assertion, with μή οὐ a doubtful negation.”¹³ Turner says it is “rare in the NT”¹⁴ and cites three possible examples. Matt 25:9 has a variant reading μήποτε οὐκ ἄρκέσῃ which then could be read ‘Perhaps there might not be sufficient for us and you’. The edited text has instead the οὐ μή + subjunctive construction, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too’. The second example is 1 Thess 5:15 which seems most naturally to be a simple prohibitive subjunctive, ‘See that no one repays another with evil for evil’. If it is indeed a subjunctive of cautious statement the meaning might be, ‘Look, someone might repay with evil’, a rather unlikely choice. The third example is 2 Tim 2:25, an admittedly difficult sentence: μήποτε δώῃ αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς μετάνοιαν / ‘if perhaps God may grant them repentance’. This translation in *NASB* could be proper for a subjunctive of cautious statement, but *NASB* marginal note points to Acts 8:22 as a parallel in sense, where the grammatical structure is entirely different. Turner translates the phrase ‘perhaps God will give’. BAGD makes it elliptical, involving an imbedded deliberative question: ‘(seeing) whether God may perhaps grant’.¹⁵ At any rate, this may possibly be the only example of a subjunctive of doubtful assertion in the NT.

THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN DEPENDENT CLAUSES

By far the more frequent use of the subjunctive mood is in dependent or subordinate clauses.¹⁶

¹²There are 13 examples: Matt 15:6; 16:22; 26:35; Mark 13:31; 14:31; Luke 21:33; John 4:14; 6:35; 10:5; Gal 4:30; Heb 10:17; Rev 9:6; and 18:14. Variant readings would provide more.

¹³H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar for Schools and Colleges* (New York: American Book Co., 1916) 297.

¹⁴Turner, *Syntax*, 98.

¹⁵BAGD, 519.

¹⁶81.5%, or 1513 instances to 344 in “main verb” clauses. Even this is not an accurate representation, for as I have shown above in dealing with the independent

In Final (Purpose/Result) Clauses

The largest group of dependent subjunctives is found in final clauses, those expressing purpose or result, or, as they are referred to in some grammars, telic or ecbatic.¹⁷ One example is Rom 5:20: νόμος δὲ παρεισῆλθεν ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα / 'And the Law came in that the transgression might increase'. These clauses are introduced by a variety of conjunctive expressions: ἵνα (405), ἵνα μή (91), ἵνα μηδέ (1), ἵνα μηδεῖς (2), ἵνα μήποτε (1) (total with ἵνα 500); μή (3), μή πως (5), μήποτε (25) (total with μή 33); ὅπως (33), ὅπως ἂν (5), ὅπως μή (3) (total with ὅπως 41). These are all consistent with older Greek usage, except that the ἵνα clause is greatly extended because it so often serves as a paraphrase for the infinitive,¹⁸ and ὅπως has lost ground.

The same lack of distinction between purpose and result is to be seen in these clauses as with the infinitives of purpose,¹⁹ though in most cases the context makes the sense clear. The vast majority are true purpose clauses (97%). There are four examples where the sense clearly seems to be result,²⁰ one of which is especially difficult to understand if it expresses purpose: John 9:2: 'Ραββί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, . . . ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ; / 'Rabbi, who sinned . . . that he should be born blind?' In 12 instances²¹ I have considered the matter undecided, although I would lean toward their being result. The list of those cases which are not clearly purpose or result could be greatly expanded.

Another parallel with the infinitive of purpose is the frequent use of these subordinate purpose clauses after intransitive verbs of motion, and almost without exception the same verbs are involved (ἀναβαίνω, καταβαίνω, and ἔρχομαι and its compounds). Also transitive verbs (like ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω) use the subjunctive purpose clause and the infinitive of purpose interchangeably.

In Substantival or Noun Clauses

These noun clauses will be treated next because they are closely related to the final clauses—they are not second in frequency of

uses, many of them were found within subordinate clauses, particularly in the deliberative where the question is being quoted indirectly and in emphatic negation which may appear in any clause.

¹⁷38%, or 574 of 1513.

¹⁸BDF, 196–202.

¹⁹Cf. my article, "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study," *GTJ* 6 (1985) 10–12.

²⁰John 9:2; 1 Cor 7:29; Phil 1:26; and 1 Thess 5:4.

²¹Matt 23:26, 35; Luke 9:45; 11:50; 12:36; 16:26 (2); John 4:36; 6:5; Rom 11:11; 2 Thess 3:14; and 2 Tim 1:4.

occurrence.²² Indeed, they are identical with the final clauses in form, using the same conjunctive phrases and the same subjunctive mood. Until NT Greek was recognized as a part of Koine Hellenistic Greek rather than of older, classical Greek, grammarians and commentators went to great pains to insist that these must be interpreted as telic. Now they are recognized as a legitimate idiom of the language of that time and are treated separately.

The following conjunctive phrases are used in these nominal clauses: ἵνα (198), ἵνα μή (15), ἵνα μηδεὶς (2) (total with ἵνα 215); μή (16), μή που (1), μή πως (4), μήποτε (3) (total with μή 24); ὅπως (14). Like the final clauses from which they were derived, these nominal clauses most frequently function in places where infinitives could have been used.

As Subject

There are 19 subjunctives in subject nominal clauses. Ten are subjects of an impersonal verb (συμφέρει [9] or λυσιτελεῖ [1]), as in John 16:7: συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω / 'it is to your advantage that I go away'. Four are subjects of the copulative verb ἐστίν (whether expressed [3] or understood [1]), as in Matt 10:25: ἄρκετόν τῃ μαθητῇ ἵνα γένηται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ / 'It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher'. Five are subjects of a passive verb (δίδωμι [2], γράφω [2], or ζητέω [1]), as in 1 Cor 4:2: ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις ἵνα πιστός τις εὑρεθῇ / 'It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy'. Elsewhere the infinitive is used commonly.

As Object

A very large number of subjunctives appear in clauses which function as the object of a verb. These will be classified according to the different types of verbs which have these clauses as objects. Robertson says that these clauses are "found with verbs of striving, beseeching, commanding, fearing."²³ I will follow that pattern, but supplement it by calling attention to the close parallels with object infinitives.

With Verbs of Striving. The first category includes verbs which express effort to bring about an action ('to attempt', 'to accomplish', 'to cause', 'to plan', etc.), as in John 11:53: ἀπ' ἐκείνης οὖν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐβουλεύσαντο ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτόν / 'So from that day

²²There are 251 instances (17%), making them fourth in frequency.

²³Robertson, *Grammar*, 991.

on they planned together to kill Him'. There are 28 which use a ἵνα clause as object: ποιέω* ('to cause', 7), ἐτοιμάζω (3), τίθημι ('to appoint', 3), ἀγαλλιάω (2), ἀγαρεύω (2), βουλεύω (2), διατίθημι (2), πείθω ('to persuade', 2), συμβουλεύω* (2), ἀνασεύω (1), ζηλόω (1), and ζητέω* (1); (total 28). Compare this group with the second category of complementary infinitives. Those marked with the asterisk also use the infinitive object (three more [listed below] have cognates which use the infinitive).

With Verbs of Wishing. Θέλω is the only verb of wishing which uses the ἵνα clause as object, e.g., 1 Cor 14:5: θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε / 'Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy'. Θέλω is used this way 8 times; there are 3 elliptical constructions in which θέλω probably should be supplied. This usage is parallel to my first category of complementary infinitives which includes θέλω with other verbs of similar meaning. Note that in the example cited the same verb has both an infinitive and a ἵνα clause complement.

With Verbs of Permitting. Ἀφίημι more frequently uses a complementary infinitive construction, but the ἵνα clause can express the same sense, as in Mark 11:16: καὶ οὐκ ἤφιεν ἵνα τις διενέγκῃ σκευὸς διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ / 'And He would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple'. In the other example included in this classification, δίδωμι (Mark 10:37) occurs in the sense of "to give [the privilege] to [do something], to grant, to permit." The ἵνα clause describes the gift which they were seeking permission to have. This use parallels the third category of complementary infinitives.

With Verbs of Beseeking. There are 64 subjunctives in this category. As object clauses of these verbs they express the content of the thing asked or sought and are thus a kind of indirect discourse, as in Col 1:9: προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι ἵνα πληρωθῇτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ / 'to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will'. The following conjunctions are used: ἵνα (49), ἵνα μή (6), and ὅπως (9). The verbs which use this construction are παρακαλέω* (21), προσεύχομαι* (16), ἐρωτάω* (15), δέομαι* (6), αἰτέομαι* (2), and 4 other instances where there is ellipsis requiring that "pray" or "ask" be supplied.

With Verbs of Commanding. The object clause uses the subjunctive (also a form of indirect discourse) to express the content of the command 33 times, as in Luke 4:3: εἰπὲ τῷ λίθῳ τούτῳ ἵνα γένηται ἄρτος / 'tell this stone to become bread'. The verbs with which the subjunctive is so used are εἶπον* ('to command', not simply 'to say') (6), ἐπιτιμάω (6), διαστέλλω (4), γράφω* (4), λέγω* (3),

ἀπαγγέλλω* (1), βάλλω (1), διαμαρτύρομαι* (1), ἐμφαίνω (1), ἐντέλλω* (1), ἐξορκίζω (1), κηρύσσω* (1), παιδεύω (1), παραγγέλλω* (1), and συντίθημι (1). The conjunction is almost always ἵνα (28), or one of its negatives, ἵνα μή (2), ἵνα μηδεὶς (2), or ὅπως (1).

It should be noted that this object clause with a subjunctive verb is used only when it would have been a command or request in a direct quotation, or in the imperative mood. It is not used with an indirectly quoted simple statement, which would usually be ὅτι with the indicative. The infinitive of indirect discourse may be used with either statements or commands. Thus ἵνα with the subjunctive is equivalent to some infinitives, ὅτι with the indicative is equivalent to some infinitives, but a ἵνα clause is never equivalent to a ὅτι clause. The mood is significant—nominal clauses use the subjunctive when they refer to something indefinite, doubtful, subjective, potential, or future.²⁴

With Verbs of Fearing, Apprehension. A group of verbs which express fear, warning, or apprehension, often in English followed by 'lest', may express the ground for that apprehension by a nominal clause with a subjunctive verb,²⁵ as in Acts 5:26: ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ τὸν λαόν, μὴ λιθασθῶσιν / 'for they were afraid of the people, lest they be stoned'. The conjunction characteristically used is μή (15), but these occur also: μήποτε (3), μή πως (4), μή που (1), and even ἵνα (3) and ἵνα μή (1) occur with βλέπω. The verbs used are βλέπω ('watch out for') (11), φοβέομαι* (10), ἐπισκοπέω (2), προσέχω* (2), and σκοπέω (1). In one instance the governing verb should be supplied, probably with βλέπω.

As Limiting or Epexegetic

A nominal clause with a subjunctive verb often explains or limits another substantive (a use termed 'epexegetic' when used of an infinitive). The substantive so described may be noun, an adjective, or a pronoun.

Limiting a Noun. The ἵνα clause can define the meaning or application of a noun, as with ἐξουσία in Mark 11:28: τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἵνα ταῦτα ποιῇς; / 'who gave You this authority to do

²⁴This has also been seen in indirect questions; they normally use the indicative, but when they are deliberative in nature they preserve the subjunctive.

²⁵The indicative also is used with this construction. "Μὴ in an expression of apprehension is combined in classical with the subjunctive if the anxiety is directed towards warding off something still dependent on the will, with the indicative of all tenses if directed towards something which has already taken place or is entirely independent of the will" (BDF, 188).

these things?' The conjunctions used are ἵνα (30) and ὅπως (4). This usage is parallel to the exegetical infinitive, and 8 of the 16 nouns so described also use the infinitive construction.

Limiting an Adjective. The subjunctive can be used in a clause to limit an adjective, as in John 1:27: οὐ οὐκ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ἄξιος ἵνα λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος / 'The thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie'. The adjective ἄξιος is related to 'untying'. The conjunction is always ἵνα (6). Three of the 4 adjectives so limited also occur with the exegetical infinitive (the fourth occurs in its negative form).

Limiting a Pronoun. A subjunctive clause can also limit a pronoun, as in John 17:3: αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή, ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σε / 'And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee'. The ἵνα clause stands in apposition to and is explanatory of the pronoun αὕτη. The conjunctions used are ἵνα (28), ἵνα μή (1), and μή (1). The pronoun in each case is οὗτος. This same construction also uses the infinitive frequently.

In Indefinite Clauses

"Ordinary relative clauses simply define more exactly a definite antecedent, and take the construction and negative of simple sentences."²⁶ Thus the mood is indicative and the negative used is οὐ. But when the antecedent is indefinite the relative is accompanied characteristically by the indefinite modal particle ἄν or ἕάν and the mood is subjunctive. These indefinite relative clauses are usually expressed in English by adding '-ever' to the relative: *whoever*, *when-ever*, *wherever*, etc. Strictly speaking the term includes the clauses introduced by the relative adverbs of time, place, etc., and in this larger connotation they comprise the second largest category of subjunctive usage.²⁷ For clarity, I will deal with them in several categories, using the term 'indefinite relative clauses' for those introduced by a relative pronoun. Those using relative adverbs of time, place, etc., will be labeled accordingly.

²⁶Smyth, *Grammar*, 359.

²⁷J. Gresham Machen, in his *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (New York: MacMillan, 1950) 175, says "This is one of the commonest uses of the subjunctive," and includes among his examples one indefinite relative clause of place. The actual counts are: indefinite relative 137, indefinite temporal 205, indefinite locational 10, indefinite comparative 6; total 358 or about 24%. Many grammarians term this construction "conditional relative clause," drawing very precise analogies between it and the various patterns of formal conditional clauses. See my discussion in "Other Conditional Elements," *GTJ* 4 (1983) 183-84, esp. n. 29.

Indefinite Relative Clauses

Indefinite relative clauses characteristically use a subjunctive and are introduced by a relative pronoun with the indefinite particle, as in 1 John 4:15 ὃς ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ / 'Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God'. The pronouns used are the simple relative ὃς (110), the correlative ὅσος (14), or the indefinite relative ὅστις (12). The indefinite particles used are ἄν (82) or ἐάν (51).²⁸ In the 3 cases where an indefinite particle is absent, the pronoun itself is indefinite.²⁹

Indefinite Temporal Clauses

Clauses expressing time constitute a second type of indefinite relative clause which uses the subjunctive mood. The time referred to is indefinite or unknown, always future to the viewpoint of the speaker, as in Matt 2:13: καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἄν εἴπω σοι / 'and remain there until I tell you'. There is a great variety of introductory expressions, including conjunctions, temporal adverbs, and improper prepositions with a genitive relative pronoun as object.³⁰ Most of them include the indefinite particle ἄν or ἐάν. The actual combinations are as follows: ὅταν (124), ἕως (12), ἕως ἄν (20), ἕως οὗ (14), ἕως ὅτου (4), ἄχρι (4), ἄχρι ἧς (1), ἄχρι οὗ (2), ἄχρις οὗ (3), ἄχρις οὗ ἄν (1), μέχρι (1), μέχρις οὗ (2), ἐπὶ ἅν (3), ὁσάκις ἐάν (4), ὡς ἄν (3), ἄφ' οὗ ἄν (3), ἡνίκα ἄν (1), ἡνίκα ἐάν (1), and πρὶν ἢ ἄν (1).

A large number of temporal clauses uses the indicative mood, including some which are introduced by the same conjunctive phrases used to introduce the subjunctive. When a temporal clause refers to definite or known time the normal mood is indicative. When the time is indefinite or uncertain because it is still future or not yet known the normal mood is subjunctive.

Indefinite Local Clauses

In a few instances clauses introduced by relative adverbs of place use the subjunctive, as in Mark 14:14: ὅπου ἐὰν εἰσέλθῃ εἰπατε τῷ οἰκοδεσπότῃ / 'wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house'. The adverbs used are ὅπου (9) and οὗ (1); in every instance it is followed by the indefinite particle ἐάν (9) or ἄν (1).

²⁸Cf. Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 423; BDF, 57; and Robertson, *Grammar*, 190-91.

²⁹ὅστις in James 2:10 (twice); in Heb 8:3 the antecedent of the relative is an indefinite pronoun.

³⁰ἧς, antecedent ἡμέρας; οὗ, antecedent χρόνου (supplied); and ὅτου (gen. of ὅστις).

Indefinite Comparative Clauses

Comparative clauses almost always use the indicative mood, but two passages (using 6 verbs) have the comparative particle ὥς followed by the subjunctive. 1 Thess 2:7 has ὥς ἑάν which clearly is indefinite and understandably takes the subjunctive. In Mark 4:26 ὥς is followed by 4 subjunctive verbs and the indefinite particle is missing in the earliest manuscripts.³¹ BAGD³² calls this "gravely irregular fr. a grammatical viewpoint" and suggests textual corruption. BDF points out the need for "the indispensable ἑάν or ὅταν."³³ But Robertson³⁴ argues that ἑάν is not indispensable with the subjunctive (for example, temporal ὥς in some manuscripts of Gal 6:10) and claims that the subjunctive alone makes it indefinite.

In Third Class Conditional Clauses

The third largest group (328, or 21.7%) of subordinate subjunctives occurs in the protasis of the simple future condition which characteristically is introduced by ἑάν or ἄν and has its verb in the subjunctive. The mood reflects accurately the basic significance of this construction, that of potentiality or indefiniteness by reason of futurity.³⁵ This construction is usually introduced by ἑάν (241),³⁶ ἄν μή (63), ἄν (4), κἄν (13), ἑάνπερ (3) (total with ἑάν 324); and by εἰ (1), εἴτε . . . εἴτε (2), ἐκτός εἰ μή (1) (total with εἰ 4).³⁷

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ἵνα Clause as an Equivalent to the Infinitive

It is not within the scope of this study to explain or even to trace the historical development by which the Greek language ultimately lost its infinitive before the encroachment of the ἵνα clause; rather I will survey the situation as it was in the Greek in the NT. As ὅτι with the indicative increasingly became a substitute for the infinitive in indirect statements, so ἵνα with the subjunctive became a substitute for the infinitive in indirect commands and requests. But beyond this,

³¹For example, K, B, and D.

³²BAGD, 897.

³³BDF, 192.

³⁴Robertson, *Grammar*, 968.

³⁵For a full treatment the reader is referred to my previous article, "Third (and Fourth) Class Conditions," *GTJ* 3 (1982) 163-75.

³⁶The numbers here indicate the times the subjunctive verb occurs in these constructions, not the number of third class conditional sentences.

³⁷For a discussion of these anomalous constructions see my articles "Third (and Fourth) Class Conditions," 164 and "Other Conditional Elements," 174-75.

the ἵνα clause became an alternative expression for almost every function of the infinitive. It seems important at this point to demonstrate this, and to let it impact the interpretive process.

A comparison of the functions of the infinitive with those of the ἵνα clause shows their remarkable parallels. Even in older Greek both were used to express purpose, but in the NT the infinitive increases in frequency, particularly with verbs of motion. In contrast with this tendency, the use of the infinitive in its noun-functions shows a sharp decrease in favor of the ὅτι or ἵνα clause. Every use of the infinitive demonstrates this. In this section I will examine the relationship between the ἵνα clause and the infinitive.

The ἵνα clause is used as the subject of impersonal, predicative, and passive verbs, as is the infinitive.³⁸ It is used as the object of many verbs which often use the complementary infinitive, as, e.g., verbs of wishing (θέλω), verbs of striving and doing (δίδωμι, ἐτοιμάζω, πείθω, ποιέω, συμβουλεύω, τίθημι, ζηλώω, ζητέω), verbs of permitting or granting (ἀφίημι, δίδωμι), as well as other verbs of like kind which do not use the infinitive in the NT. The ἵνα clause also forms the object of verbs of mental action and communication which take the infinitive of indirect discourse, such as verbs of beseeching (αἰτέομαι, δέομαι, ἐρωτάω, παρακαλέω, προσεύχομαι), and verbs of commanding (ἀπαγγέλλω, διαμαρτύρομαι, εἶπον ['to order, command'], ἐντέλλω, γράφω, κηρύσσω, λέγω ['tell to'], παιδεύω, παραγγέλλω, and συντίθημι). Note that the ἵνα clause is used in indirect discourse only with verbs of beseeching and commanding, where the direct discourse would have been in the imperative. For indirectly quoted statements ὅτι + indicative can be used in place of the infinitive. A clause introduced by ἵνα, ἵνα μή, or μή with a subjunctive verb is also used as object after verbs of fearing and apprehension (φοβέομαι, προσέχω) where occasionally the object infinitive occurs.

The substantival ἵνα clause also substitutes for an epexegetic infinitive, one which limits or qualifies or stands in apposition to another substantive. Again it is found frequently with the same words as the infinitive, such as nouns (βουλή, χρεία, χρόνος, ἐντολή, εὐκαιρία, ἐξουσία, θέλημα, ὥρα), adjectives (ἄξιος, δίκαιος, ἱκανός), and in apposition to the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος.

Even the so-called "imperative infinitive" has its counterpart with the "imperative ἵνα clause,"³⁹ although both are probably misnamed and should rather be considered elliptical, with some governing verb to be supplied from the context.

³⁸Examples of these and the following will be found above in the various classifications.

³⁹Cf. Turner, *Syntax*, 94–95. For my discussion of the imperative infinitive see "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study," *GTJ* 6 (1985) 14–15.

That leaves only one infinitive usage without a parallel ἵνα construction, the articular infinitive after prepositions to express various adverbial relationships. Indeed this is one of the two uses of the infinitive which in NT Greek shows an increase, the other being the purpose infinitive.

This very close correspondence between the infinitive and the ἵνα clause must certainly be taken into consideration in the exegetical process. For example, 1 John 1:9 (πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος ἵνα ἁφῇ ἡμῖν / 'He is faithful and righteous to forgive') should be understood so that the ἵνα clause is epexegetic to the two adjectives. It is not a purpose clause—forgiveness is not the purpose for which God is faithful and just. To see it as result would be clearer ("so that He will . . ."), but the epexegetic infinitive provides the clearest sense.

The Ambivalence of the Future Indicative with the Aorist Subjunctive

A Definition of the Phenomenon

In places where an aorist subjunctive verb might be expected, occasionally a future indicative is found. This does not happen in the reverse, however; never does an aorist subjunctive occur where a future indicative might be expected.⁴⁰ The future functions normally as an indicative, but it also functions in certain situations where the subjunctive (the potential future) might be expected.

Historical Background

Grammarians have attempted to explain this ambivalence by resorting to a study of the historical development of the language.⁴¹ Several factors have been suggested. (1) Historically the future indicative may have originated from the aorist subjunctive. (The aorist subjunctive functioned as a simple future in Homer, for example.) (2) There was always some duplication and confusion in form between the two, either in actual identity of spelling (e.g., λύσω, for both fut. ind. and aor. subj.) or in similarity or identity of sound between the long and short thematic vowel (e.g., λύσει and λύσῃ [later written λύσῃ], or λύσομεν and λύσωμεν). (3) This confusion is often demonstrated in variations between manuscripts of the same text. (4) The

⁴⁰For example, there are 4 places where εἰ is followed by a subjunctive verb; in none of these can it be explained as a substitute for a future indicative (εἰ in 1 Cor 14:5 and Rev 11:5; εἴτε in 1 Thess 5:10). See my discussion of these in "Other Conditional Elements," *GTJ* 4 (1983) 175. In each instance the element of future contingency is present and the subjunctive is the expected mood. It is the conditional particle that needs explanation.

⁴¹BDF, 183, 186–88; Robertson, *Grammar*, 924–28, 984.

basic significance of the subjunctive is always futuristic; its connotation of doubtful assertion or potentiality is by reason of futurity—it is uncertain because it has not happened. Even when the subjunctive was used to describe an event which was only a possibility to the speaker at that time, the verb would often be changed to the indicative after the fact.

Survey of the Occurrences

Since a list of subjunctives such as has been the basis of this study is compiled from form rather than function the instances where a future so functions are not included. And a list of future indicatives would have to be subjected to the same type of study as I have attempted here on subjunctives in order to discover which categories of usage are parallel. I have not yet done this, so I have attempted to find these ambivalent future indicatives from the other end—by searching the constructions which normally take the subjunctive in order to find instances where the future is found instead. It would be too much to expect that I have found them all.

This ambivalence occurs in most of the classified functions of the subjunctive. Among the main-clause uses it may be found in deliberative questions⁴² but it clearly is present in the emphatic negation category as well: οὐ μή + future indicative.⁴³

This ambivalence between aorist subjunctives and future indicatives occurs most frequently in places where the subjunctive would be expected in subordinate clauses. It is rare in conditional⁴⁴ and relative clauses,⁴⁵ as well as temporal indefinite relative clauses. It normally uses the subjunctive verb but twice the future indicative is found.⁴⁶ It

⁴²A few possible examples found were Luke 22:49; John 3:12; Rom 3:5; 4:4; 9:14; even a present indicative is found in John 11:47. But not all future questions are deliberative; those so described usually show an element of anxiety or perplexity. The examples just cited may be matter of fact examples of a simple future question.

⁴³Matt 15:6; 16:22; 26:35; Mark 13:31; 14:31; Luke 21:33; John 4:14; 6:35; 10:5; Gal 4:30; Heb 10:17; Rev 9:6; 18:14.

⁴⁴Luke 19:40; Acts 8:31. There are also examples of other tenses in the indicative after εἰναι: present (1 Thess 3:8) and perfect (1 John 5:15). Cf. my article "Other Conditional Elements," *GTJ* 4 (1983) 175.

⁴⁵In relative clauses the indicative is normal, and only in the category called 'Indefinite Relative' would the subjunctive be expected. But the term 'indefinite' may be a bit confusing. For example, it is not merely that the relative has an indefinite antecedent (in Matt 7:24)—the pronoun is the indefinite relative ὅστις but the mood is indicative, as it is also in 10:32 where the future indicative occurs naturally in an exactly parallel passage. (But cf. Matt 7:12 where the indefinite particle εἰναι appears along with a verb in the subjunctive.) This construction looks at the action itself as indefinite or uncertain by reason of futurity.

⁴⁶Luke 13:28; Rev 4:9. The imperfect is also used (Mark 3:11), as well as the present (Mark 11:25) and the aorist (Mark 11:18).

is primarily in the clauses introduced by ἵνα, μή, and ὅπως where the future indicative more frequently takes the place of the aorist subjunctive.⁴⁷ It occurs in both the final and nominal clauses introduced by these words.

Is there a Distinction in Meaning?

All that has been said thus far would not lead one to expect any difference in meaning between the future indicative and aorist subjunctive in these clauses—the difference would seem to be formal, not semantic. But some have insisted upon a distinction in meaning. One of my students in a Greek exegesis class called to my attention the view that in 1 Pet 3:1 the future indicative means that the purpose was guaranteed fulfillment, since the indicative is the mood of actuality. The believing wife who lives a godly life before her unbelieving husband is assured that she will win her husband. Is this claim valid? How can it be checked?

Since the claim is based on a grammatical principle, it can be checked. When the grammars are checked for theoretical statements about the indicative mood, there are claims that it is the mood of certainty, of actual statement, etc.; but there is no claim which applies that principle to this situation. Instead there are explanations such as those reviewed above, but there is no suggestion of a difference in meaning.

A study of all the contexts where the idiom occurs is more decisive, and such a study demonstrates that there are some contexts where the purpose was actually accomplished, although there is no indication that it was guaranteed. In most instances, predictably, there

⁴⁷ After ἵνα: Mark 15:20; Luke 14:10; 20:10; John 7:3; Acts 21:24 (2); Rev 3:9 (2); 6:4, 11; 9:4, 5; 13:12; 14:13; after ἵνα μή: Gal 2:4; 1 Pet 3:1; Rev 8:3; 9:20; 22:14; after μή: Luke 11:35; Col 2:8; and after ὅπως: Matt 7:8; Mark 14:2; Heb 3:12.

In addition there are a number of places where the clause contains one or more subjunctives normally, with a καί and a future indicative following: Matt 5:25; 13:16; Rom 3:4 (after ὅπως); Eph 6:3; Rev 2:10. This is capable of two explanations; either it is another ambivalent use of the future and the verb is simply another dependent on the conjunction, or it is a new beginning, an additional comment in which the future indicative stands independently. The latter seems to fit the sense better in most cases.

There are also a number of places where these clauses use indicative verbs other than the future: aorist (Luke 24:20, after ὅπως; Gal 4:17; 1 Thess 3:5); perfect (Gal 4:11); present (1 Cor 4:6; Gal 4:17). These are outside our present consideration, but it may be noted that of those using the aorist and perfect 3 are in contexts expressing apprehension where even older Greek used μή with indicative (cf. BDF, 188) and the other communicates the proper sense although the structure may seem to be irregular. The two showing present indicatives do appear to be standing where subjunctives would be expected. At least they illustrate that in Hellenistic Greek the correspondence between the conjunction and the mood are somewhat relaxed.

is no indication whether the purpose was realized or not. But there are a number of instances where the purpose was *not* realized, and obviously was not guaranteed. For example, in Luke 20:10 the owner of the vineyard sent his servant ἵνα . . . δύσουσιν / ‘in order that they might give him some of the produce’. In Gal 2:4–5 false brethren sneaked in to spy ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν οἷς οὐδὲ πρὸς ὥραν εἴξαμεν / ‘in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield . . . even an hour’. (See also Gal 4:17 and Mark 14:2.) These examples demonstrate that the principle “usage determines meaning” is as true in syntax as it is in lexicography.

QOHELETH: ENIGMATIC PESSIMIST OR GODLY SAGE?

ARDEL B. CANEDAY

The enigmatic character and polarized structure of the book of Qoheleth is not a defective quality but rather a deliberate literary device of Hebrew thought patterns designed to reflect the paradoxical and anomalous nature of this present world. The difficulty of interpreting this book is proportionally related to one's own readiness to adopt Qoheleth's presupposition—that everything about this world is marred by the tyranny of the curse which the Lord God placed upon all creation. If one fails to recognize that this is a foundational presupposition from which Ecclesiastes operates, then one will fail to comprehend the message of the book, and bewilderment will continue.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

THE book of Qoheleth,¹ commonly known as Ecclesiastes, is perhaps the most enigmatic of all the sacred writings. It is this quality which has been a source of sharp criticism. Virtually every aspect of the book has come under the censure of critics—its professed authorship,² its scope and design, its unity and coherence, its theological orthodoxy, and its claim to a place among the inspired writings.

A superficial reading of Qoheleth may lead one to believe he is a man with a decidedly negative view of life in its many facets. This negative quality has been disproportionately magnified by liberal

¹Though the meaning of קהֶלֶת continues to be much debated, the sense accepted here is connected with the Hebrew verb for assembling (קָהַל), and its form suggests some kind of office-bearer (the feminine ending). Qoheleth was one who assembled a congregation for the purpose of addressing it, thus the Preacher. See H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966) 7.

²The Solomonic authorship has been widely rejected by scholars, both critical and conservative. Some noted conservatives opt for a post-exilic dating of the book. See, e.g., E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes* (reprint;

critics and conservatives alike. Understandably, then, Qoheleth has become the delight of critics and the embarrassment of conservatives. Embarrassment has led to greater perplexity about the book, and perplexity has brought negligent disuse of this valuable book.

Certainly the viewpoint of Qoheleth upon the world and life must be included in any discussion of OT ethical problems. If the book is indeed a unity, the composition of a single wise man, what is its theme? Is it pessimistic? Can a completely pessimistic view of life be admitted a place in the canon of Holy Scripture? Does not the recurring theme of "a man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work" (cf. 2:24; 3:12, 13; etc.) suggest an Epicurean influence? Perhaps Stoicism, too, has influenced Qoheleth, for he claims, "All is vanity" (1:2; etc.). What exactly is Qoheleth's view of the world and of life? What was the source of his ethics? Is Qoheleth the record of a man's search for meaning gone awry, ending in cynicism? Or, is it the book of a godly wiseman who gives orthodox counsel for directing one's path through the labyrinth of life?

QOHELETH IN THE HANDS OF LIBERAL CRITICS

Modern critics have seized upon the alleged disunity of Qoheleth and upon the presumed contradictions. This alleged antithetical character has led critics to disavow the single authorship of Qoheleth, to discredit the theological expressions, to disclaim its ethics and view of the world and of life, and to displace the book from its authority and position as one of the writings of Holy Scripture.

Earlier critics, such as Tyler, postulated a late date (ca. 200 B.C.)³ for the book in order to accommodate the alleged influence of Greek philosophical schools. Tyler sought to explain the discordance within Qoheleth in terms of conflicting influences from Epicureanism and Stoicism.⁴ To Tyler the recognition of discontinuity and discordance

Minneapolis: James and Klock, 1977) 1-15 and E. J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) 339-41. Young suggests that the author, being post-exilic, placed his words into the mouth of Solomon, employing a conventional literary device of his time (p. 340). However, in favor of Solomonic authorship see G. L. Archer, "The Linguistic Evidence for the Date of 'Ecclesiastes,'" *JETS* 12 (1969) 167-81.

³Thomas Tyler, *Ecclesiastes* (London: D. Nutt, 1899) 30-32.

⁴Tyler (ibid., 54) states, "Our book possesses a remarkable antithetical character, its contrasts not unfrequently assuming the form of decided and obvious contradiction. This antithetical character is especially marked in those two great thoughts of the philosophical part of the book—the Stoic, ALL IS VANITY; and the Epicurean, EAT, DRINK, AND ENJOY."

within Qoheleth is an assumed fact without need of proof. Hence, it is of little consequence for Tyler to claim Greek philosophical influence upon a late Hebrew writer, subject to the erosion of the ancient Jewish faith.⁵

Tyler disallows any attempt to demonstrate a genuine continuity in Qoheleth which would show that it has no real discordant or antithetical character and especially no "obvious contradictions, as for example, that between the Stoic and Epicurean. . . ."⁶

One might fancy that the author of Ecclesiastes intended that the contrarities of this book should in some sort reflect and image forth the chequered web of man's earthly condition, hopes alternating with fears, joys succeeded by sorrows, life contrasting with death. It must not be supposed, however, that we can find an adequate explanation in the hypothesis that the author of Ecclesiastes arranged his materials in a varied and artistic manner.⁷

The denial of an overall literary plan for Qoheleth and a dislike for its ethical expression, which motivated Tyler's criticism,⁸ also motivates other negative criticisms. Recent critics do not identify Qoheleth's philosophy as being derived from or influenced by Greek schools.⁹ Yet, Qoheleth's literary method is still looked upon as a "most serious defect."¹⁰ Assuming the accuracy of this assessment, Jastrow seeks to recover the true and original words of a purely secular Qoheleth by stripping away additions and corrections of later pious redactors who sought to reclaim the book.¹¹ In this manner he essays to isolate the interpretation of pious commentators and the maxims which were added to counterbalance the objectionable character of the book.¹²

Other critics represent the alleged discontinuities of Qoheleth in varying manners. Siegfried divided the book among nine sources.¹³ Yet, none of the scholars who attempt to reconstruct the words of Qoheleth by isolating redactors' statements demonstrate why the book

⁵Ibid., 33.

⁶Ibid., 54.

⁷Ibid.

⁸See Ibid., 63–64 where Tyler concludes that קהלת must be the personification of *Philosophy*, a designation in which the speculations of several philosophers are embodied.

⁹See, e.g., R. B. Y. Scott, *Qoheleth*, (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 197.

¹⁰Morris Jastrow, *A Gentle Cynic* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1919) 124.

¹¹Ibid., 197–242.

¹²Ibid., 245ff.

¹³See the citation by George Barton, *Ecclesiastes* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1971) 28.

should have attracted such an effort on the part of pious interpolators and sages to legitimize it. It could have been easily suppressed or dismissed. Gordis properly points out,

But that the book was subjected to thoroughgoing elaboration in order to make it fit into the Biblical Canon is an assumption for which no real analogy exists, indeed is contradicted by the history of the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha after their composition.¹⁴

Recent critics recognize a basic unity in Qoheleth, abandoning the assumption of widespread interpolation. Yet, Qoheleth continues to be viewed negatively in its ethics and world and life view. Scott sees both heterodoxy balanced by "unimpeachable orthodoxy."¹⁵ Yet, it is the divergence from the orthodox which is emphasized. Scott states, "It denies some of the things on which the other writers lay the greatest stress—notably that God has revealed himself and his will to man, through his chosen nation."¹⁶ He adds further that,

In place of a religion of faith and hope and obedience, this writer expresses a mood of disillusionment and proffers a philosophy of resignation. His ethic has no relationship to divine commandments, for there are none. It arises rather from the necessity of caution and moderation before the inexplicable, on the acceptance of what is fated and cannot be changed, and finally on grasping firmly the only satisfaction open to man—the enjoyment of being alive. The author is a rationalist, an agnostic, a skeptic, a pessimist, and a fatalist (the terms are not used pejoratively!).¹⁷

Even for Scott it was necessary for an orthodox interpreter to affix the two closing verses (12:13, 14) in order "to safeguard the faith of the uncritical reader,"¹⁸ and to assure Qoheleth a place in the canon.

The critics, with unified voice, decry Qoheleth's ethics and his world and life view as being opposed to that of the remainder of the OT. He is perceived as a maverick among the sages who propounded incompatible propositions.

QOHELETH AS VINDICATED BY CONSERVATIVES

In response to liberal critical views, several conservative scholars have attempted to vindicate the apparently negative view of life in

¹⁴Robert Gordis, *Koheleth* (New York: Schocken, 1968) 71–72.

¹⁵Scott, *Qoheleth*, 191.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 191–92.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 194.

Qoheleth and have affirmed its rightful place in the canon of Holy Scripture. Among evangelicals there is a general acknowledgment that Qoheleth is the composition of one individual.¹⁹ However, many evangelicals agree with liberal critical opinions concerning Qoheleth's world and life view.

The Jewish conservative scholar Gordis assumes a negative character about Qoheleth's world and life view and seeks to alleviate some of the tension of his polarized expressions. He resolves the alleged dilemma of antithetical expressions in Qoheleth by accounting for many of the "apparently pious sentiments" as quotations cited for the purpose of discussion.²⁰ For example, Gordis claims that יִדְעַ (8:12) is used by Qoheleth to introduce "a quotation of conventional cast which he does not accept."²¹ But the verb claimed to be introductory appears in the middle of the portion it is claimed to mark off as a quotation.

Leupold, in laying out introductory principles for the interpretation of Qoheleth, states that the recurring phrase, "under the sun," indicates that Qoheleth deliberately restricted his observations and explanations of human events to a human perspective. By this Leupold means that Qoheleth, in his observations and reflections upon life, assumed a position of complete neglect of revelation and the world to come. He spoke from the perspective that God had not revealed Himself, and, furthermore, that God is inaccessible.²² In actuality, though, Qoheleth was a "true man of God who is offering invaluable counsel."²³ For Leupold, Qoheleth was a rationalistic apologist who sought to lead his readers to true happiness by showing how miserable life is "under the sun," that is to say "apart from God." He attempted to direct men toward God by seeking to convince them rationalistically of their despair apart from God.

The *New Scofield Reference Bible* extends Leupold's approach.

Ecclesiastes is the book of man "under the sun" reasoning about life. The philosophy it sets forth, which makes no claim to revelation but which inspiration records for our instruction, represents the world-view of the wisest man, who knew that there is a holy God and that He will bring everything into judgment.²⁴

¹⁹This is true even of those who reject Solomonic authorship. Some have maintained that Solomon was the original author, but that at a later time, before the exile, the book was edited and enriched (see Young, *Introduction to OT*, 340–41).

²⁰Gordis, *Koheleth*, 174.

²¹*Ibid.*, 283; cf. 287.

²²Leupold, *Ecclesiastes*, 28; cf. 42–43.

²³*Ibid.*, 30.

²⁴C. I. Scofield, ed., *New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University, 1967) 696. This interpretive approach virtually abandons Qoheleth to the grasp of

Both Leupold and the *New Scofield Reference Bible* have misunderstood Qoheleth's use of his phrase "under the sun." He did not employ it to restrict his perspective to common ground with natural man. He was no mere philosopher who, working from a system of "natural theology," sought to understand God's creation without the interpretive revelation of the Creator. The phrase "under the sun" is not a restriction upon the *manner* of Qoheleth's reflections, but it circumscribes the *sphere* of those things which he observed in contrast to that sphere in which God's reign knows no opposition. The expression, "under the sun," therefore, speaks of the earth upon which man dwells as does Qoheleth's phrase, "all that is done under heaven" (cf. 1:13, 14; etc.).

An older commentator, Moses Stuart, energetically tried to vindicate Qoheleth from charges of impiety. However, he too accepts the charge that Qoheleth's book contains blatant contradictions and several impious conclusions. Nevertheless, Stuart acquits the author by suggesting that those objectionable portions must be understood in the same way as the "objectors" who appear in the apostle Paul's letters.²⁵ Stuart characterizes the book as a replaying of the struggle through which Qoheleth's mind had passed when he set himself on

liberal critics, for one wonders how such an espousal of worldly wisdom could possibly hold any valid claim to canonicity. This approach agrees that Qoheleth hopelessly contradicts himself, but such contradiction is accounted for by a not-so-lucid device of separating *revelation* from *inspiration*. See, e.g., the note on 9:10 concerning Qoheleth's characterization of the dead: "This statement is no more a divine revelation concerning the state of the dead than any other conclusion of 'the Preacher' (1:1). No one would quote 9:2 as a divine revelation. These reasonings of man apart from revelation are set down by inspiration just as the words of Satan (Gen 3:4; Job 2:4-5; etc.) are recorded. But that life and consciousness continue between death and resurrection is directly affirmed in Scripture . . ." (p. 702). Such an approach vitiates the whole character of Qoheleth's book. If one isolates 9:10 from the context of Qoheleth's burden, one may argue that Qoheleth did not believe in the conscious existence of the dead. But to assert such a conclusion goes far beyond Qoheleth's intention. Qoheleth does not concern himself with the state of man after death. He addresses the matter of death from the vantage point of things done "under the sun," i.e., the realm of the living (see 9:3, 6, 9). His purpose is to celebrate life, for as long as man has breath he has influence and activity in all "the things done under the sun" (9:6). But once a man dies, he no longer has anything to do with the activities of man "under the sun" (9:10). It is the same perspective that King Hezekiah held in his prayer to the Lord who spared his life. "For the grave [sheol] cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praise; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about your faithfulness" (Isa 38:18-19). In the same way Qoheleth only seeks to urge men to the full enjoyment of life *now*, "for it is now that God favors what you do" (9:7), for "anyone who is among the living has hope" (9:4).

²⁵ Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, ed. and rev. by D. C. Robbins (Boston: Dreper and Halladay, 1880) 36-39.

the course of philosophical inquiry. Along this course it does not matter that doubts and improper conclusions "had passed through the author's mind, for they had greatly perplexed and disturbed him. The passing through his mind does not stamp them with the authority of opinions settled, deliberate, and final."²⁶

Hengstenberg also succumbs to the claim that Qoheleth wrote several contradictions and antithetical assertions in expressing his ethics and world and life view. However, Hengstenberg seeks to vindicate Qoheleth from the charge of self-contradiction by means of a different approach. For him an understanding of the historical milieu out of which the book of Qoheleth arose is absolutely necessary. He states, "This book is unintelligible except on the historical presupposition that the people of God was [*sic*] in a very miserable condition at the time of its composition."²⁷ He claims that the book was composed in post-exilic days (contemporary with or slightly later than Malachi)²⁸ when the Persians held dominion over God's people. They were in a most miserable condition, slaves in their own land. Heathens ruled over them. Degradation, injustice, and misery ruled everywhere. The glorious splendor of Solomon's days had long passed and the Jews were now in a time of persecution.²⁹

With this understanding of the times of Qoheleth, Hengstenberg finds it easy to take the various apparently contradictory or impious expressions and place them into the mouths of tyrannized impious Jews. Qoheleth only quotes them as reflecting the popular sentiment of the times. So, Hengstenberg says, "Vanity of vanities was the universal cry: alas! on what evil days have we fallen! They said to one another, 'How is it that the former days were better than these?' Ecclesiastes vii.10."³⁰

Hengstenberg's method of interpretation is observed in his remarks upon Qoh 9:5-7. Of Qoheleth's words, "the dead know nothing" (9:5), he says,

Such is the language of natural reason, to those whose eye all seems dark and gloomy that lies beyond the present scene, because it fails in this world to discern the traces of divine retribution. The Spirit says on the contrary: "the spirit returns to God who gave it."³¹

²⁶Ibid., 39. He states further, "It only shows what embarrassments the writer had to remove, what perplexities to contend with. The question is not, whether this or that occupied his mind, which he has recorded in his writing, but whether this or that was adopted by him, and made up a part of his settled and ultimate opinion" (pp. 39-40).

²⁷Hengstenberg, *Ecclesiastes*, 45.

²⁸Ibid., 10-11.

²⁹Ibid., 2-16.

³⁰Ibid., 45.

³¹Ibid., 212.

Hengstenberg then explains in his comments on 9:7 that Qoheleth had spoken in vv 1-6 "as the representative of the then prevailing spirit of the people," but in v 7 he takes up the cause of God "to oppose the popular views and feelings."³²

Hengstenberg, along with many evangelicals, has followed many liberal scholars in dating the book late based upon internal evidence. The external evidence for Solomonic authorship has been almost universally rejected by scholars.³³ Along with an appeal to its language,³⁴ scholars cite the condition of Qoheleth's times as an argument against Solomonic or early authorship.³⁵ As widely accepted as this argument may be, it seems to be begging the question. If, indeed, Qoheleth must be understood as post-exilic in order to interpret it and to make its meaning intelligible, then what continuing value does it have for God's people? Certainly, it can be argued that it is useful for men in hard times and when under affliction; but Qoheleth's perspective is not so restricted. He touches upon virtually every conceivable condition of life, and his verdict upon it all is the same, whether prosperous or poor, wise or foolish, industrious or slothful, whether times are good or bad (cf. 7:13, 14). Qoheleth was not provincial in his world view; he set out to explore "all that is done under heaven" (1:13). He states with sincerity and not exaggeration, "then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun" (8:12).

The nature of the book itself argues against Hengstenberg and others who would find internal historical evidence to place it during the post-exilic Persian domain over Palestine. The book defies such attempts. The book presents a world and life view which is in accord with the rest of Scripture. It does not occupy itself with local phenomena such as Hengstenberg claims. Quite to the contrary, it depicts life which is *universally* true throughout all of earth's history since the fall of man in the garden. The book deals with things which are common among men everywhere without a necessary connection to a particular historical milieu. An element common to many conservative scholars is their assessment of Qoheleth's ethics and world and life view. For them, Qoheleth was a man who, though he feared God, looked upon the world around him from the vantage point of a "reason" that had little to do with his faith in the Creator. They see a

³²Ibid., 213.

³³See, e.g., the arguments of Christian D. Ginsburg, *Coeleth* (London: Longmans, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1861) 245ff.

³⁴See Archer, "Linguistic Evidence for the Date of 'Ecclesiastes,'" 167-81 for a technical defense of Solomonic authorship.

³⁵See Ginsburg, *Coeleth*, p. 249; Stuart, *Ecclesiastes*, pp. 38-39.

dichotomy between faith and reason.³⁶ This view hinders the grasping of Qoheleth's true world and life view.

One final trend among some conservative scholars must be addressed. This is the trend to differentiate between "appearance" and "reality." One says of Qoheleth's world and life view, "There is much that superficially viewed, has the appearance of disordered confusion. But that this is the real state of the case is here emphatically denied."³⁷ Again concerning the theme of the book, it is asserted

The problem really discussed is the *seeming* inequalities of divine providence. These are reconciled with the justice of God, as they are in the book of Job reconciled with his mercy and goodness.³⁸

These comments fall into a dichotomous pattern because they refer to Qoheleth's observations of the world as things he only judged to be "apparent." Sierd Woudstra clearly expressed this perspective: "Kohleth is on the one hand dealing with life as he observed it, while on the other hand he knew and was convinced by faith that things were different."³⁹

Shank astutely observes,

Woudstra here raises an important issue in the interpretation of Qoheleth. If there does exist a distinction here, that distinction is *not* between faith and reason, but between faith and *sight*, i.e. between "faith" (that comes from special revelation) and that revelation presently available to any natural man as he perceives the creation about him. . . . But, *in what sense* and *to what degree* is such a "distinction" relevant to Qoheleth?⁴⁰

Qoheleth did not look upon the world from the perspective of a *tabula rasa*. Nor was his observation of creation and "all that God has done" (8:17) conducted upon the foundation of "natural theology." His reflections upon this world and life are not the aimless ramblings and superficial remarks of one given to "sense-experience theology."

³⁶Cf. H. Carl Shank, "Qoheleth's World and Life View As Seen in His Recurring Phrases," *WTJ* 37 (1974) 61. Hengstenberg (*Ecclesiastes*, 26) states, "The problem before the writer is considered from the point of view of Natural Theology with the aid of experience, and of reason as purified by the Spirit of God."

³⁷See the article attributed to Greene, "The Scope and Plan of the Book of Ecclesiastes," *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 29 (1857) 422.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 423-34. Cf. Walter Kaiser, Jr., *Ecclesiastes* (Chicago: Moody, 1979) 17.

³⁹Sierd Woudstra, "Kohleth's Reflection upon Life" (unpublished Th.M. thesis; Westminster Theological Seminary, 1959) 58. He criticized Leupold for his nature/grace dichotomy (p. 106). But see Woudstra's attempt to Christianize Qoheleth (pp. 91ff., esp. pp. 99-101).

⁴⁰Shank, "Qoheleth's World and Life View," 61.

Rather, Qoheleth's whole approach was governed by foundational presuppositions: his firm beliefs that God had revealed Himself through the biblical themes of creation, the fall of man, and the ensuing history of redemption; and that God had cursed man and the earth so pervasively that nothing was left untouched by evil.

Qoheleth lived among a people who knew the Lord God and his relationship to the world through the special revelation of the *Torah*. Therefore, his knowledge of the world and of life was regulated by his antecedent knowledge of God, the one whom he feared. This being true, Qoheleth's "faith" and "sight" were not two entirely distinct and independent modes of observation.

"Faith" and sight" do not oppose one another in Qoheleth. His "sight"⁴¹ (his perception of this world and life) is his "faith" put into operation to consider "all that God has done under the sun" from the orientation of his firm belief in the fall and the curse of man as recorded in Genesis 3. He looked upon the world and all of life from the vantage point of a genuine OT believer who well understood not only the reality of the curse of God placed upon life "under the sun," but also its pervasive effect upon everything "under heaven." It is just such a world and life that Qoheleth depicts in vivid terms.

QOHELETH REVISITED

Thus far it has been the burden of this paper to suggest that it is the assumed antithetical character and presumed contradictions which have hindered correct interpretation of Qoheleth. Many commentators suggest that more than one mind was operative in the composition of the book. Even some evangelicals portray Qoheleth as a combination of at least two divergent philosophies or perspectives: natural reason devoid of special revelation and orthodox affirmations of faith (though they be few). It is the thesis of this article that Qoheleth's enigmatic character cannot be resolved by following either of these two conventional lines of interpretation. The enigmatic character and polarized structure of the book is not a defective quality reflecting opposing and contradictory philosophies. On the contrary, the book's antithetical character is a deliberate literary device set in Hebrew thought patterns designed to reflect the paradoxical and anomalous nature of the world which Qoheleth observed. The difficulty of interpreting this book and of understanding its message is proportionally related to one's own readiness to acknowledge the true nature of this world—a world in bondage to the tyranny of the curse placed by God

⁴¹Cf. *Ibid.*, 68–70, where Shank astutely discusses Qoheleth's phraseology, "I perceived."

upon all creation (cf. Rom 8:20ff.). If one fails to recognize this foundational presupposition of Qoheleth, then he will fail to comprehend the message of the book.

Qoheleth's Arrangement

Many scholars have contended that Qoheleth has no cohesive plan or design. Long ago Delitzsch stated:

A gradual development, a progressive demonstration, is wanting, and so far the grouping together of parts is not fully carried out; the connection of the thoughts is more frequently determined by that which is external and accidental, and not unfrequently an incongruous element is introduced into the connected course of kindred matters. . . . All attempts to show, in the whole, not only oneness of spirit, but also a genetic progress, an all-embracing plan, and an organic connection, have hitherto failed, and must fail.⁴²

Hengstenberg follows suit:

A connected and orderly argument, an elaborate arrangement of parts, is as little to be looked for here as in the special portion of the Book of Proverbs which begins with chapter X., or as in the alphabetical Psalms.⁴³

Surely such assertions are extreme, for even a cursory reading of Qoheleth should convince anyone that its character is quite different from the book of Proverbs.⁴⁴ With the book of Proverbs one can select at random a single verse or two and observe a complete unity of thought in them that may not have any real connection with what precedes or follows. Yet this does not hinder interpretation of its meaning. However, Qoheleth is not at all so characterized. "It is useless to take a text and ask 'What does that mean?' unless we have in our minds some scheme for the whole book into which that text

⁴²Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes*, trans. M. G. Easton (reprint in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, by C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 188.

⁴³Hengstenberg, *Ecclesiastes*, 15. He continues to say, "Such matters of plan and connection have been thrust into the book by interpreters who were incapable of passing out of their own circle of ideas, as by degrees became evident from the fact that no one of these arrangements gained anything like general recognition, but that on the contrary each remained the sole property of its originator and of his slavish followers." Concerning the theme of the book, he writes, "It is quite misleading to represent the work as occupied with a single narrow theme. . . . A superficial glance at its contents will amply show that they are of far too rich and varied a nature to be comprehended under one single theme" (p. 16).

⁴⁴See Stuart, *Ecclesiastes*, 28ff.

must fit."⁴⁵ The book of Proverbs may be read at several sittings, disconnected and randomly without disrupting one's understanding of its isolated parts. However, Qoheleth is like the book of Job; it must be read with great attentiveness given to its design and scope, for apart from the context of the complete book, any isolated portion will be wrongly interpreted. It is precisely because this principle has not been observed that so many contradictory interpretations have been spawned. When detached from the overall design of the book, any one of Qoheleth's refrains or expressions may be given extremely negative interpretations. So it is that his recurring phrase, "Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless" has been dealt with as the exasperated outburst of a cynical pessimist. Qoheleth's repeated, "A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work" has been segregated from his theme and corrupted to become the slogan of the indulgent Epicurean sensualist, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!"⁴⁶ "So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me" (2:17) is ascribed to a slothful pessimist. Examples of "decontextualized" misinterpretations of Qoheleth could be multiplied many times. But these serve to illustrate how his words in various portions have been isolated from one another so that when they are retrieved and placed back together, one is left only with a mutilated Qoheleth. With such a method, no two pieces fit together. Is it any wonder that critics and conservatives alike hear so many strange and contradictory voices in Qoheleth?

However, the solution to determining Qoheleth's arrangement and design is not to go to the other extreme. One states,

There is clear and consistent plan in the book of Ecclesiastes . . . one in fact of the most strictly logical and methodical kind. Not only is the argument well conducted, conclusive and complete, but its various points are so admirably disposed, its divisions so regular, and its different parts so conformed in structure as to give evidence that the whole was carefully considered and well digested before it was put together.⁴⁷

One must keep in mind that these are the words of one who wrote at a time prior to the present resurgence of interest in Hebrew studies, which has brought with it a heightened sensitivity to the many peculiarities of the language and its literature. Recent studies of Qoheleth

⁴⁵Cf. J. Stafford Wright, "The Interpretation of Ecclesiastes," in *Classical Evangelical Essays on Old Testament Interpretation*, ed. by Walter Kaiser, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973) 136.

⁴⁶See F. C. Thompson, ed., *The New Chain-Reference Bible*, 4th ed. (Indianapolis: B. B. Kirkbridge, 1964) 199 in the section "A Complete System of Biblical Studies."

⁴⁷[Greene], "The Scope and Plan of Ecclesiastes," 427.

have shown a much greater appreciation for the qualities of Hebrew literature and its thought patterns which find their matrix in the Near Eastern and not the Western mind.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, the structure of Qoheleth remains elusive. Once its scheme is traced out, it must still be acknowledged that the progression of its argument is not readily detectable. In many respects the book defies the Western mind that looks for clear breaks in thought around which it may be outlined. Like I John, its contours are fluid. Its boundaries are obscure. It is characterized by reiteration and recurring phrases. It is cyclical as it traverses a course around its subject. As the apostle John treated the life which is in union with Christ, he chose a spiral course for considering the manifold character of fellowship in the life of Christ.⁴⁹ The subject is of such magnitude that a glance at it from one perspective will not suffice. So it is with Qoheleth. His subject, too, is immense. A single gaze upon the world and upon life from a remote vantage point could never do justice to its multiform character.

Although Qoheleth's arrangement is difficult to determine, certain structural devices do come to light. Setting aside the book's title (1:1), epigram (1:2; 12:8), and the epilogue (12:9-14), one finds that Qoheleth begins and ends with a poem. The first poem is on the endless round of events in which man forever comes up short in his laborious toil (1:3-11). The book ends with another poem in which Qoheleth calls upon men to enjoy life while they yet have breath, for if death does not cut one off in mid-life, old age will deteriorate one's satisfaction with life and still death will finally wrench the spirit from the body (11:7-12:7). It is these two poems which set the tone and direction of Qoheleth's reflections upon life. Focusing upon the inscrutability of divine providence, Qoheleth guides his readers to acknowledge the meaninglessness of events under the sun. He directs the reader's focus away from an attempt to understand providence and toward enjoyment of life as the gift from God. "Enjoyment of life," not a search for meaning, should be man's guiding principle.⁵⁰

There is much to commend Addison Wright's view of the structure of Qoheleth which he suggests in his provocative study.⁵¹ He tries

⁴⁸See J. A. Loader, *Polar Structures in the Book of Qohelet* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979).

⁴⁹Cf. Donald Burdick, *The Epistle of John* (Chicago: Moody, 1970) 14-15; Robert Law, *The Tests of Life* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968) 1-24.

⁵⁰Robert Johnston, "Confessions of a Workaholic: A Reappraisal of Qoheleth," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 12-18. See also his study in *The Christian at Play* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 95-102.

⁵¹Addison G. Wright, "The Riddle of the Sphinx: The Structure of the Book of Qoheleth," *CBQ* 30 (1968) 313-34.

to demonstrate that there is a break between 6:9 and 6:10. The first half of the book (1:12–6:9) is characterized by the verbal pattern “all is vanity and a chase after wind.” The cessation of this phrase at 6:9 signals a major break in the book.⁵² The lines following this (6:10–12) form a transition to a different verbal pattern which is carried out throughout the remainder of the book. These verses introduce two themes which are developed in what follows: (1) what is good for man during his lifetime? and (2) who can tell man what will come after him?⁵³ Wright points out that chapters 7 and 8 are structured around the first of these themes. It is developed in four sections with each marked by the verb *אָמַר*.⁵⁴ The second motif expressed in 6:12 is developed in 9:1–11:6. The end of each unit is marked with the verb *יָדַע* or the noun *דָּעַת*.⁵⁵ Though one may not agree with all the details of Wright’s analysis, there are grammatical indicators which suggest his general divisions.

The structural development of the book can be summarized as follows. The title (1:1) and the poem (1:3–11) set the tone and direction of Qoheleth’s reflections by focusing upon the fruitlessness of man’s toil in contrast to the incessant endurance of the earth. The first major section (1:12–6:9) shows that man’s toil is vanity and “a chase after wind.” The second half of the book (after the transition of 6:10–11) develops two themes: “what is good for man” (7:1–8:17) and “man does not know what will come after him” (9:1–11:6). The poem on youth and old age (11:7–12:8) and the epilogue (12:9–14) conclude Qoheleth’s considerations.⁵⁶ However, this structural pattern does not deny that there is an overlapping of themes between sections. For example, the inability of man to comprehend life’s meaning and his failure to see what will happen after he is gone first appears in 3:11 and 3:22. Though 1:12–6:9 can be characterized as Qoheleth’s investigation of life and 7:1–11:6 (after the transition of 6:10–11) as his conclusions, there is an intermingling of both in each portion. It is this fact that prohibits any rigid outline of the book.

Qoheleth Interpreted: The Prologue

Qoheleth knew the great expanse of the subject he was about to undertake, so he prepared his plan of investigation accordingly. He says, “I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom *all that is done under heaven*” (1:13, italics added). His inquiry into the meaning of life and his examination of the character of this world were not

⁵²Ibid., 322–23.

⁵³Ibid., 322.

⁵⁴Ibid., 323.

⁵⁵Ibid., 324.

⁵⁶Ibid., 325.

restricted to provincial peculiarities, nor was his reflection narrowly conceived. He deliberately opened up his observation to the *whole* world and to events common among men universally. This he did in accordance with wisdom,⁵⁷ a wisdom guided by preestablished beliefs which show themselves throughout his discourse.

Qoheleth bursts upon his reader with his concise and vigorous exclamation: "'Meaningless! Meaningless!' says the Preacher, 'Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless'" (1:2). The intensity of the expression could hardly be exceeded. With such brilliance the book commences.

Now when the preacher gives prominence to words of such strength and to an expression so captivating, one would suppose that there would be little need to look further for the theme which the book seeks to develop and to prove. However, it has not so impressed some scholars. Hengstenberg claims,

It is quite misleading to represent the work as occupied with a single narrow theme. . . . A superficial glance at its contents will amply show that they are of far too rich and varied a nature to be comprehended under one such single theme.⁵⁸

But Qoheleth puts his arresting expression concerning meaninglessness in the position that a book of this nature would normally place its theme. Furthermore, the phrase, "everything is meaningless" (with its variations),⁵⁹ is the most dominant and pervasive of all Qoheleth's recurring phrases in the book. Also, as the book opens, so it closes with an exclamation of meaninglessness (see 12:8). Therefore, it seems advisable to adopt 1:2 as the theme which Qoheleth seeks to prove throughout the entirety of the book.

Phrases with the word *הבל* appear no less than 30 times. Of this class of phrases, Woudstra well states the main exegetical question, "Is Koheleth only saying that man's accomplishments under the sun are transitory in character, are devoid of any permanence, or is he saying that human existence and everything that goes with it is futile and meaningless?"⁶⁰ This latter sense of *הבל* is rejected by Leupold as "a pessimistic meaning . . . that is not warranted by facts"⁶¹ in Qoheleth. He avows that the word can only refer in Qoheleth to

⁵⁷Cf. Stuart's discussion of "wisdom" (*Ecclesiastes*, 50ff.) where he points out that, for Qoheleth, the contrast between wisdom and folly is not equivalent to the Proverbs' use where wisdom is piety and folly is wickedness. In Qoheleth, wisdom bears the sense of sagacity and folly, the lack of it.

⁵⁸Hengstenberg, *Ecclesiastes*, 16.

⁵⁹Cf. 1:2, 14; 2:1, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 26; 3:19; 4:4, 7, 8, 16; 5:7, 10; 6:2, 4, 9, 11, 12; 7:6, 15; 8:10, 14; 9:9; 11:8, 10; 12:8.

⁶⁰Woudstra, "Koheleth's Reflection upon Life," 38.

⁶¹Leupold, *Ecclesiastes*, 41.

"that which is fleeting and transitory, and also suggests the *partial* futility of human efforts."⁶² On the other hand, Woudstra defends the latter sense of הבל and denies that it implies pessimism.⁶³

One should not be too hasty to translate הבל with a single word as do most translations.⁶⁴ The word הבל, meaning "vapor" or "breath," is employed figuratively of anything that is "evanescent, unsubstantial, worthless, vanity."⁶⁵ The particular sense of the word must be derived from its usage in any particular context. It is employed as a designation for false gods (Deut 32:21; 1 Kgs 16:13, 26; 2 Kgs 17:15; Jer 2:5; 8:19; 10:8, 15; Jonah 2:9; Ps 31:6). The term הבל also represents the exasperated sentiments of individuals.⁶⁶ Job complains about the brevity and uncertainty of his life; it is an exasperation to him (Job 7:16).⁶⁷ The use of הבל in Ps 39:5, 6 is similar to its use in Qoheleth:

You have made my days a mere handbreadth, the span of my years is nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro; He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it.⁶⁸

The majority of the uses of הבל in the OT appear in Qoheleth, yet even here the word is more flexible than most translations would suggest. There are four general categories into which Qoheleth's use of הבל can be placed. First, there are passages in which the word expresses "meaninglessness" in the most general sense. Among these, 1:2 and 12:8 are the most prominent, for they summarize the whole book in compressed form. Other passages in this category are 2:1, 26; 4:16; 5:7, 10; 6:4; 7:6; 9:9. Second, the author employs הבל to express his vexations arising from the laboriousness of his work and his inability to control the disposition of his possessions when he departs from the earth (2:11, 17, 19, 21, 23; 4:4, 7, 8; 6:2). Third, the expression is used of Qoheleth's frustration over the delay of retribution. Retribution, adequate, appropriate, and final does not take place in the present world. The connection between wickedness and condemnation, righteousness and deliverance is not direct and obvious but shrouded and often turned upside down (2:15; 6:9; 7:15; 8:10, 14). Finally, הבל is employed by Qoheleth to vent his deepest vexation

⁶²Ibid. Italics added.

⁶³Woudstra, "Kohleth's Reflection upon Life," 38.

⁶⁴KJV, "vanity"; NASB, "vanity"; NIV, "meaninglessness."

⁶⁵BDB, 210-11.

⁶⁶For example, Isa 49:4. The servant Israel says, "I have labored in vain [וַיִּקַּח], I have spent my strength for nothing [תוֹהוּ] and vanity [הֶבֶל]."

⁶⁷Cf. Job 7:16 with Qoh 2:17.

⁶⁸NIV, Qoh 5:16-17.

with this present world—his lament over the brevity of life and the severity of death (3:19; 6:12; 11:8, 10; cf. 12:8 following the graphic portrayal of death). The quality of life is “empty” and “vacuous” and its quantity is entirely “transitory” and “fleeting.”⁶⁹ How appropriate, then, is הבל with its many nuances to express the nature of this world and life in it!

Shank sums up well Qoheleth’s employment of הבל:

Different “aspects” of the idea of vanity are employed by Qoheleth to vividly illustrate the reality of the curse of God placed upon the work of man after the Fall (cf. Gen. 3:17–19). Therefore, an attempt to find a “static” meaning to *hebel* in Ecclesiastes . . . fails to take note of the richness of the concept as used by Qoheleth.⁷⁰

Indeed, Qoheleth does announce his theme in 1:2. It is not narrowly conceived nor is it too singular. The theme of evanescence, unsubstantiality, meaninglessness, vanity is carefully carried through the whole book as a weaver threads his theme color throughout his fabric. It is sufficiently broad in its formulation, for it accurately summarizes the full contents of Qoheleth (if one does not restrict the word הבל to a rigid or static meaning).

What the Preacher states with pithy conciseness in 1:2, he restates in further summary form before he begins the body of his work. This he does in 1:3–11 in the form of a *compendium*. The opening poem serves as an abstract which compresses the essence of the book into a brief introduction.

The Preacher first asks, “What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?” (1:3). Qoheleth clearly indicates by his question the inquiry that led to his announced verdict of evanescence and meaninglessness (1:2). The query expresses in typical Hebrew concreteness the quest for the *meaning* and *purpose* of life in this present world. This often escapes the occidental mind which posits the question in more abstract terms. Qoheleth’s fondness for the book of Genesis⁷¹ throughout his work influenced how he framed his question. As scholars have observed, wisdom literature in the OT is “within the framework of a theology of creation.”⁷² Thus, one can understand why Qoheleth structured his inquiry based upon man’s divinely appointed occupation within creation (cf. Gen 2:5, 15)

⁶⁹Cf. Victor Hamilton, “hebel” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, ed. by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980) 204–5.

⁷⁰Shank, “Qoheleth’s World and Life View,” 66.

⁷¹See Charles C. Forman, “Qoheleth’s Use of Genesis,” *JSS* 5 (1960) 256–63.

⁷²Walter Zimmerli, “The Place and Limit of the Wisdom in the Framework of the Old Testament Theology,” *SJT* 17 (1964) 148.

rather than ask abstractly, "What is the meaning of life?" His interest is not economical but truly philosophical; it does not concern pecuniary profits but life's purpose and meaning.

Qoheleth states his conclusion (1:2); then he asks the question to which his conclusion is the answer (1:3). He then turns to prove his conclusion about this world and man's part in it by means of the poem in 1:4-11. This introductory poem serves as a compendium in which the message of the book is summarized. Qoheleth seeks to establish his conclusion of 1:2 by rehearsing the inflexible cyclical nature of the world and its enduring character in contrast to transitory and evanescent man. He declares, "Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever" (1:4). The earth, methodically plodding along in its routine course, does not skip a beat of its rhythm to celebrate a man's birth nor to mourn his death.

This rhythmic uniformity of seasons and events forms the context within which man dwells. It provides stability so that much of his life becomes routine; there are not shocking surprises everyday. Man can depend upon the recurrence of the daily appearance of the sun. As it sets in the westerly sky in the evening, so it shall rise in the east the next morning (1:5). Man has come to recognize the course of the wind which brings warmth or cold. It, too, is cyclical. Daily the winds change their direction bringing a variety of weather conditions (1:6). Man does not need to fear that the seas will swallow up the land, for though the rivers and streams all flow into the ocean, the sea does not overrun its boundaries. The waters dissipate and return as rain upon the land to keep the rivers flowing to the sea (1:7).

Times and seasons are a blessing to man, for God promised a regularity and uniformity upon which man could depend. "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease" (Gen 8:22). However, this blessing which gives man some measure of predictability about life becomes wearisome to him. Uniformity and repetition breeds monotony in this cursed world. Regularity has an eroding effect; it wears man down. So it is that Qoheleth declares, "All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, or the ear its fill of hearing" (1:8).

Man comes to expect the recurrence of events. Even in man's brief existence upon the earth, he comes to learn that even those few things that may occur only once in his lifetime are not new (1:9). The joy of discovery is dampened by earth's stubborn uniformity. As one excitedly exclaims, "Look! This is something new," the excitement quickly fades with the realization that, "It was here before our time" (1:10).

Uniformity; regularity; methodical, orderly recurrence; cyclical, rhythmic routine; these are all descriptive of the world which Qoheleth

observed. But there is an intruder which interrupts man's part in the profound cycle of events. It is the culprit which transforms the beauty of uniformity into a monotonous machine which mercilessly carries the sons of Adam through the corridors of time into oblivion (1:11). It is the curse which has put a blight upon everything. Nothing has escaped its clutching grasp. Surely, God's providential directing of the affairs of this world is carried out with uniform precision and beauty, yet the curse hides the full character of the one who governs the universe.

Such is the broad, sweeping picture that Qoheleth portrays in his compendium (1:3-11). The stage, with its backdrop and props, obstinately endures as earth's systems methodically press on with no apparent direction, for everything about it repeats itself. Much to the grief of the actors, they themselves have no such permanence. "Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever" (1:4). To add insult to injury, even the product of their work falters with them (1:3), so they become forgotten men (1:11). Such is the scene which stirs Qoheleth with vexation to announce with startling boldness, "'Meaningless! Meaningless!' says the Preacher, 'Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless'" (1:2).

It is Qoheleth's prologue which sets the theme, the tone and the movement of the whole book with its incessant repetition. The book takes on the shape of the world as it imitates the cadence of creation by the use of its many recurring phrases and themes. Not only has Qoheleth captured with words the pointlessness of man's life of labor in a world which outlasts him, uninterrupted by man's coming and going, but he also leads his reader to *sense* the incessant rhythm of the world by his own calculated refrains. It is precisely this recurrent character of Qoheleth with its polarized structure which should aid the reader to a proper interpretation of the book. Rather, it has become the chief point of criticism and dispute.

Qoheleth Interpreted: The Recurring Themes

As Qoheleth develops his world and life view it is imperative to observe his pattern. He sets before the reader motifs and themes, all calculated to support his verdict announced in 1:2. Qoheleth's argument will be considered under four headings: 1) polarity of themes, 2) theology of creation, 3) elusiveness of meaning, and 4) celebration of life.

Polarity of Themes

The antithetical character of Qoheleth is not to be resolved by positing contradictory thought patterns within Qoheleth himself, nor

by appealing to the voices of presumed editors, redactors, and glossators as the liberal critics do. Rather the polarity of structure and expression found in the book reproduces the *character of this world*. As the world which Qoheleth observed is characterized by its ceaseless recurrent cycles and paradoxes of birth and death, war and peace, and the like (cf. 3:1-8), giving it an enigmatic quality, so Qoheleth reproduces its pattern in literary form, repeatedly turning back upon himself to reiterate and restate themes and observations upon various subjects which support his verdict.⁷³ This he does by casting his work into a polarized structural form as illustrated by 3:1-9.⁷⁴ Just as there is no place "under the sun" to find a tranquil resting place devoid of life's vexations where the movement of this world ceases to erode the strength and vitality of man, so Qoheleth's composition does not permit its readers to settle their minds with contentment upon a particular portion of his book. There is always tension as various observations and reflections upon life are juxtaposed in polarity. He hates life (2:17), yet he commends its enjoyment (2:24ff.). Death (7:1ff.) and life (9:4ff.) hold prominence in Qoheleth's polarized expressions. On the one hand he can say, "The day of death is better than the day of birth" (7:1) and on the other "a live dog is better off than a dead lion" (9:4). Illustrative of this polarized character of Qoheleth, 7:16, 17 stand out: "Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise—why destroy yourself? Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool—why die before your time?" It is these paradoxical observations and expressions which characterize the book and cause such great difficulty for so many exegetes. The tension cast by Qoheleth's observations and reflections is unrelenting.

Qoheleth involves the *whole* reader in an incessant movement of thought as he carefully weaves his various strands of thread into a multiform fabric, fully reflecting this world and life in it. His literary image reflects the harsh realities of this present world as he places side by side contradictory elements to portray the twisted, disjointed and disfigured form of this world (see 1:15; 7:13). Man as observer is not exempted from the tension. His emotional and mental involvement in the contradictions of this world create a complexity of thought, motives and desires. Qoheleth was a man torn by the presence of evil and vexed by the ravages of injustice, oppression and death. He compels his reader to confront this diverse nature of this paradoxical world in which evil has supplanted the good. In this

⁷³See Shank, "Qoheleth's World and Life View," 57-73 for an excellent study of Qoheleth's recurring phrases.

⁷⁴Cf. Loader, *Polar Structures in the Book of Qoheleth*, 29ff.

world wickedness drives out justice (3:16). Oppression replaces charity (4:1ff.). Everything is marked by twisting and incompleteness (1:15). In the place of sweet labor (which was man's original allotment), the sweat of the brow embitters one's work with the brine of wearisome and laborious toil which is fruitless (cf. Gen 3:17-19; with Qoh 2:11, 17f., etc.).

The world which Qoheleth observed is cursed; it is disjointed; it is upside down. Death and decay dominate. The appointment of every man has become the grave. As a man is born, so he must die (3:1). He comes into a world naked and leaves stripped of all the profits from his labors (5:15-17). He leaves his wealth to be squandered by one who has not worked for it (2:17-21), or it falls into the hands of a stranger by some misfortune (6:1-2). But the greatest evil of all is the fact that death is no respecter of persons (9:3). It comes upon men so haphazardly, often leaving the wicked to live long in their wickedness (7:15).

In this paradoxical world no man knows what shall befall him—whether love or hate (9:1), good or evil (7:14), prosperity or destruction (11:6). An adequate and appropriate retribution is absent from this present world. The connection between wickedness and condemnation, righteousness and reward is hidden and apparently non-existent (cf. 2:15; 6:9; 7:15; 8:10, 14). It is upon this subject that Qoheleth's polarized expressions have caused his readers to become most disconcerted and unsettled. For on the one hand he complains that wickedness has driven out justice in the place where one would expect to find equity (3:16). Yet, he quickly offsets the present scene with an expression of confidence that "God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time for every deed" (3:17). Qoheleth vents his grief that sentences for crimes are not quickly executed (8:11). Yet, he again expresses confidence that the final day will bring justice where it is now absent (8:12-13). But immediately Qoheleth turns the reader back to view the paradox that vexes him most: "There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: righteous men who get what the wicked deserve, and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say is meaningless" (8:14).

Herein lies the chief source of Qoheleth's dilemma; divine providence in this present world disproportionately distributes deserts—the wicked prosper and the righteous flounder (cf. Job 21:4-33; Ps 73:4-12; Jer 12:1-4). The almighty God who rules this world hides himself behind a frowning providence. It seldom appears that the benevolent God who created the universe has control of his own creation. It rarely seems that a rational and moral being gives motion to the world. Even the beauty of uniformity plagues man's thoughts about

God. Uniformity becomes monotonony in the present cursed world, for it is precisely upon the basis of the world's disjointed regularity that men scoff at God and his promises (see Mal 2:17; 3:14–15; 2 Pet 3:3–7). The present world order becomes the occasion for wicked men to jeer God and for righteous men to vex their souls that divine justice is so long delayed. It is precisely this character of the world which gives rise for the need of patient endurance on the part of the righteous as they await the fulfillment of God's promises of justice and deliverance (cf. 2 Pet 3:8–13, 15).

Theology of Creation

The Preacher's occasion and purpose for writing his book is found in his opening question: "What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?" (1:3). He asks this question repeatedly (2:22; 3:9). This may seem to be a rather narrowly conceived question for setting the theme of Qoheleth which is broad in its discussions and investigations. It has been stated earlier that Qoheleth's interests were not merely to investigate the measure of profits gained from labor, but the inquiry expresses tangibly man's quest to know the meaning and purpose of life. The entire book of Qoheleth is a reflection upon life in this world in order to search out its meaning. The theme question found in 1:3 is conceived in terms of man's original divine mandate to work in paradise and to subdue the earth by ruling over it as king (Gen 2:5, 15; 1:28). The creation motif holds a significant place in the formulation of Qoheleth's thoughts. He acknowledges, as does the Genesis account, that man was made from the dust of the ground and will return to it (Qoh 12:7; 3:20; cf. Gen 2:7; 3:19); that man was designed to live in companionship (Qoh 4:9–12; 9:9; cf. Gen 1:27; 2:21–25); that man is bent toward sin (Qoh 7:29; 8:11; 9:3; cf. Gen 3:1–13); that human knowledge is derived and has God-given limitations (Qoh 8:7; 10:14; cf. Gen 2:17); and that God is sovereign over all (Qoh 3:10–13; cf. Gen 1:28–30; 3:5).

Johnston observes, "Perhaps most importantly, Ecclesiastes and Genesis exhibit substantial agreement as to the central focus of the creation motif—that life is to be celebrated as a 'good' creation of God."⁷⁵ But the problem that exists for Qoheleth is the intrusion of sin and God's curse upon all creation and, in particular, upon man. When God created man, his design was that man till the soil as an extension of God's hand to carry on the work which God had made (Gen 2:4–7). Man's purpose, then, was to work upon the earth, an earth which yielded readily to the hands of Adam to produce only

⁷⁵ Johnston, "'Confessions of a Workaholic,'" p. 22.

those things which "were pleasing to the eye and good for food" (cf. Gen 2:9). But the curse of God came upon man and his environment because of Adam's rebellion. It changed the scene drastically so that no longer would man's work be pleasurable. Instead it is characterized by laboriousness and pain and yields a meagerly disproportionate return for the energy expended (Gen 3:17-19). Thorns and thistles grow where once beautiful and luscious produce sprang forth. Man was made to eke out a living under adverse conditions. His whole life became involved with this effort. Thus, the real question of the meaning of life is the query Qoheleth asks: "What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?" What does man have left when all his painful and wearisome toil is complete? What goal is there for a life which is so consumed with such endless and exhausting drudgery? If there is meaning to life, where is it concealed?

It is Qoheleth's orientation to the Scriptural account of creation which forms his presuppositional basis for a world and life view. He recognized a great disparity between his world and that which came directly from the creative hand of God; the curse had intruded to disrupt the harmony of creation. The evil that Qoheleth observed "under the sun" was not inherent in nor of the essence of creation, but was externally imposed. The curse of Gen 3:17ff. becomes in Qoheleth's language *disjointedness* and *discontinuity* or kinks and gaps which are irrevocable (1:15) because they have been imposed by God (7:13). By the curse God subjected creation to the frustration of bondage and decay (cf. Rom 8:19-21), creating the enigma which bewilders men. The world has been turned upside down, so that it bears little resemblance to the pristine paradise that it once was. For Qoheleth, then, the world was neither what it once was nor what it will be. Therefore he designed his book, not to "wrest some form of order from chaos"⁷⁶ or to *master* life, but to bring men to acknowledge that this world and life in it is marked by aimlessness, enigma, and tyranny. Qoheleth upholds the creational design to celebrate life as a divine gift which is to be enjoyed as good, something to be cherished reverently and something in which man delights continually.⁷⁷ This, perhaps, is the greatest enigma in Qoheleth—his bold assertion of the meaninglessness of life "under the sun" and his resolute affirmation that life is to be celebrated joyfully. The fact that he unequivocally maintained both is not proof that Qoheleth was a double-minded man—secular and religious. He was not a pessimist who saw nothing better than to indulge the flesh. He was a godly sage who could affirm both the aimlessness of life "under the sun" and the enjoyment

⁷⁶G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) 420.

of life precisely because he believed in the God who cursed his creation on account of man's rebellion, but who was in the process, throughout earth's history, of redeeming man and creation, liberating them from the bondage to decay to which they had been subjected (cf. Rom 8:19-21). *Because* Qoheleth was a man of faith, he held this perspective, for it was through his faith in the God who revealed himself that Qoheleth knew what the world once was and what it will be again. It was because of this orientation that so many enigmatic and antithetical considerations and observations are held in proper tension within his mind and within his book.

Elusiveness of Meaning

The identification of 1:3 as the theme question, the question of life's meaning, is confirmed by the book itself. In 3:9-11 Qoheleth reveals the breadth of the question. It was no mere *economic* question about one's wealth, but it was a *philosophical* inquiry about life's meaning and purpose. After a poetically structured recitation of the divine appointment of affairs which touch every man in this cursed world (3:1-8), Qoheleth breaks forth with his thematic question, "What does the worker gain from his toil?" (3:9). The relentless tide of events described by Qoheleth is reminiscent of the cosmological cycle earlier recited (1:4-11). It is precisely to such unalterable and rhythmic recurrence of events "under the sun" that the Preacher affixes his question of meaning (1:3 before the poem in 1:4-11; 3:9 after the poem in 3:1-8). Man is part of the cyclical flux of time and circumstance "under the sun." He both inflicts adversity and suffering upon others and is victimized by the incessant recurrence of events. Man struggles for life and meaning in an environment that taunts him with its paradoxes: birth and death, weeping and laughter, love and hate, war and peace, and the like. Such a relentless and inflexible cycle of events extends beyond the grasp of man's control and understanding. Qoheleth never suggests that a man should resign himself *passively* and put forth no "effort to avert the times and the circumstances."⁷⁸ Yet, his purpose is not to aid his reader to *search* for order so as to master life.⁷⁹ Von Rad is misleading when he offers the following wisdom literature's intention: "There was surely only one goal, to wrest from the chaos of events some kind of order in which man was not continually at the mercy of the incalculable."⁸⁰

⁷⁷Cf. Johnston, "'Confessions of a Workaholic,'" 22-23.

⁷⁸See the improper conclusion of Louis Goldberg, *Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 64.

⁷⁹Cf. Johnston, "'Confessions of a Workaholic,'" 26-27.

⁸⁰G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. J. D. Martin (New York: Abingdon, 1972) 316.

Though Qoheleth surely is not a passive victim of the cruelties of the endless rounds of this life, neither does his focus become the task of mastering life, straining to "wrest some form of order from chaos."⁸¹ Rather, his entire concentration is on how one directs his life through the labyrinth of this meaningless life; it is guidance and counsel to his readers to enjoy life in spite of the inscrutable and enigmatic world in which they live.

On the one hand, precisely where one might expect pessimistic resignation from Qoheleth, the notion is resisted. On the other hand, he does not counsel his readers to search for order in an attempt to manipulate life. It is his burden to show from his consideration of life's limits and enigmas the futility of man's attempt to understand the whole of life and thus to master it. He counsels his readers to replace false and illusory hopes of understanding providence (thereby manipulating life) with a well-established, joyful confidence that creation is God's gift.⁸²

One may be puzzled about the connection between the question of 3:9 and the statement of 3:10. However, if one remembers that the inquiry of 3:9 is not economic but the basic question of life's meaning, the connection is clear. If every event in this cursed world has its appointed time (depending not upon human influence but upon the determination and providence of God), "what does the worker gain from his toil" (3:9)? What purpose and meaning does life hold? In response to his inquiry, Qoheleth says, "I have seen the burden God has laid on men" (3:10).⁸³ What is this burden (הַמִּשָּׁרֵי)? Hengstenberg refers it back to the moil and toil of v 9 "to which men subject themselves in that they desire, and yet are unable to effect anything, because everything comes to pass as it has been fixed and predetermined by God."⁸⁴ However, the inquiry of v 9 is not so restricted but is a philosophic question relative to the basic meaning and purpose of life. It does not merely have in view moil and toil. Rather, it encompasses the whole of life's activity in a cursed world where labor and life is subjected to drudgingly irksome and fruitless efforts. Thus, the *burden* spoken of in v 10 is not to be identified as simply the moil and toil in which men are occupied.

The quest in v 9 is linked with v 11 through v 10. The burden (הַמִּשָּׁרֵי) is comprised of this: "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (3:11). To express the fact that God has made everything *beautiful* in its time, Qoheleth

⁸¹ von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, 421.

⁸² Johnston, "'Confessions of a Workaholic,'" 26.

⁸³ See Kaiser, *Ecclesiastes*, 53–54 concerning the singular הַמִּשָּׁרֵי.

⁸⁴ Hengstenberg, *Ecclesiastes*, 104.

uses יָפֶה as a synonym for טוֹב. Yet, the beauty can hardly be that goodness which the Lord God observed in the work of his hands at the beginning (cf. Gen 1:31, etc.), for creation's subjugation to bondage and decay had not yet come. But after the fall, God's creation was pervasively marred by the curse as is seen in the paradoxes of human affairs listed by Qoheleth (3:1-8). The beauty of which the Preacher speaks consists in this, that what occurs among men comes to pass at its appointed time as a constituent portion of the whole of God's work among men.⁸⁵

Not only has God ordered the affairs of all creation beautifully, he also has put אֶת-הָעֵלֶם in the hearts of men (בְּלִבָּם). The suffix in בְּלִבָּם refers to the הָאָדָם in v 10. How is הָעֵלֶם to be understood? Some older commentators attempted to translate the word in the sense of the Arabic ³lam as 'knowledge' or 'understanding'.⁸⁶ With this interpretation, מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר is translated "without which," so that the sense of the text is: "He has also set *knowledge* in the hearts of men, *without which* they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end."⁸⁷

This exegetical course is rejected by most commentators.⁸⁸ Apparently Luther took אֶת-הָעֵלֶם to mean "the world," "the desire after the knowledge of the world," or "worldly mindedness."⁸⁹ However, it seems best to follow the lead of Delitzsch and others who take הָעֵלֶם as "eternity."⁹⁰

The "eternity" which God has put into the hearts of men is a certain inquisitiveness and yearning after purpose. It is a compulsive drive, a deep-seated desire to appreciate order and beauty, arising because man is made in the image of God. It is an impulse to press beyond the limits which the present world circumscribes about man in order to escape the bondage which holds him in the incessant cycle of the seasons and in order to console his anxious mind with meaning and purpose.⁹¹ It is man's desperate attempt to make sense out of what seems senseless and meaningless. Yet, הָעֵלֶם must not be restricted to this, but also must include a residual knowledge of God's eternal power and divine nature which God has placed in every man (cf.

⁸⁵Cf. Delitzsch, *Ecclesiastes*, 259.

⁸⁶Cf. Stuart, *Ecclesiastes*, 174-75. But see Delitzsch's response to this, *Ecclesiastes*, 260.

⁸⁷Stuart's strained conclusions on 3:11 are inconsistent with his comments on 8:17. See Stuart, *Ecclesiastes*, 173-74 and 308.

⁸⁸See Delitzsch, *Ecclesiastes*, 260.

⁸⁹Attributed to Luther by Delitzsch, *Ecclesiastes*, 260.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 261.

⁹¹*Ibid.*

Rom 1:19),⁹² for it is this knowledge which gives man his sense that there is purpose and meaning (though it entirely eludes him).

This compulsive desire to appreciate the beauty, symmetry and order of creation shows itself differently at various levels. Aesthetically man seeks to appreciate creation's beauty as he imitates his creator by fashioning beauty with his own hands. Philosophically man pursues knowledge of the universe to know its character, composition and meaning. Theologically man seeks to discern creation's purpose and destiny. Since man has this craving for meaning, a deep-seated inquisitiveness and capacity to learn how everything in this world fits together, he seeks to integrate his experience into a meaningful whole. He yearns to connect the various pieces of his experience to see each portion in the context of the whole of his life. He desperately desires to have a meaningful understanding of the world and of life to give him direction and mastery. He is like Qoheleth who sought to add "one thing to another to discover the scheme of things" (7:27).

Herein then is the task or burden which God has laid upon the sons of Adam: the search for meaning in a disjointed and topsy-turvy world. It is not a burden because man is a creature who has only limited and derived knowledge. It is a heavy and frustrating burden because man's quest for meaning is now performed in a cursed world wherein inexplicable paradox dominates—there is birth and death, hate as well as love, and more war than peace fills the earth. It is this kind of world, uniform yet twisted and marked by gaps, which Qoheleth explored and declared to be meaningless.

In spite of the fact that God has "made everything beautiful in its time" (an orderly arrangement even of chaos), and despite the certainty that "He also has set eternity in the hearts of men," Qoheleth declares, "yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (3:11c). This incapacity of man is emphasized repeatedly by Qoheleth to establish the meaninglessness which he announced at the beginning as his theme. The inability to discover God's purposes and design from events and experiences is an essential thread which Qoheleth weaves into the fabric of his work. The elusiveness of meaning becomes the dominant motif in 6:12–11:6. Man is reminded that he "cannot discover anything about his future" (7:14; cf. 3:22) because God has made both good and evil to befall men quite haphazardly. Is proof needed for the inscrutable ways of God? Qoheleth declares, "In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness" (7:15). The tyrannies and the benevolences in this

⁹²Otto Zöckler, *Ecclesiastes*, trans. William Wells, in vol. 5, *Commentary on the Holy Scripture*, ed. by J. P. Lange (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960) 67.

world, both caused by God, come upon men with disparity and inequity, for "righteous men get what the wicked deserve and the wicked get what the righteous deserve" (8:14). God has not revealed to men the secrets of the purposes which move his actions (cf. Deut 29:29).

Man's limitation and fractional knowledge, as he seeks to "add one thing to another to discover the scheme of things" (cf. 7:27), is emphasized in 8:7-8a: "Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come? No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death." The disproportionate allotment of God's providence ruins men's illusory hopes of mastering life and discovering the divine meaning and purpose for life's experiences and events. "There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: righteous men get what the wicked deserve and wicked men get what the righteous deserve" (8:14). Who would challenge Qoheleth? He is right! The incongruities and paradoxes that baffled Qoheleth bewilder every man. It is this disharmony and absurdity that compelled Qoheleth to impart to his readers a realistic perspective:⁹³

When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man's labor on earth—his eyes not seeing sleep day or night—then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it [8:16-17].

Celebration of Life

It is precisely in the contexts where Qoheleth magnifies and emphasizes man's bewilderment that so many scholars have failed to understand Qoheleth. His candid and realistic confessions followed by counsel have brought severe criticism. On the one hand, he is accused of pessimism for his acknowledgement of the elusiveness of meaning and, on the other hand, he is said to be orthodox because of his counsel to sane living (see 12:13-14). At some places his counsel is viewed as grossly defective. Delitzsch asserts, "If Kohleleth had known of a future life . . . he would have reached a better ultimatum."⁹⁴ Delitzsch is referring to 3:12-14:

I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That every man may eat and drink, and find

⁹³Cf. 9:1-3, 11-12.

⁹⁴Delitzsch, *Ecclesiastes*, 262. In contrast to the negative interpretation by Delitzsch, see R. N. Whybray, "Qoheleth, Preacher of Joy," *JSOT* 23 (1982) 87-98.

satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it, so men will revere him.

Now wherein lies the shortcoming of Qoheleth's counsel? He urges men to do good (טוב) and to be glad (לשמח). The enjoyment to be derived from life is coordinate with obedience to divine commandments.⁹⁵ This is how men are to conduct themselves as long as they are living (בחייהם). Furthermore, that which a man may eat or drink or find satisfying in his toil is confessed as "the gift of God." Above all, Qoheleth acknowledges that what God does, though it may be perplexing to man, he does "so men will fear him" (3:14). How could Qoheleth be more orthodox? Is not this the counsel of one who considers the eternal, the future existence of man? If Qoheleth did not believe in the resurrection, why would he counsel men to behave obediently, fearing God? What is there to fear, if it is not God's judgment of *resurrected* men?

Qoheleth's world and life view was not fashioned according to a natural theology restricted to the affairs of men "under the sun." If that were the case, he would have counselled his readers to revelry, for he saw in this world that it is the wicked who live long (7:15; 8:14). He does not envy the way of the ungodly as Asaph began to do, nearly to his own destruction (cf. Ps 73:3–17). If Qoheleth had no belief in final retribution—the demise of the wicked and the rewarding of the righteous—his counsel would have been, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (see 1 Cor 15:32), the very philosophy of which he is often accused. Qoheleth does not yield to pessimism and despair, nor to an ascetic withdrawal, nor to an anesthetic desensitized denial of evil. Instead, from the recognition that what the righteous and wicked receive is inverse to their deserts (8:14), he moves directly to his holy counsel: "So I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun" (8:15).

Qoheleth's perspective upon the incongruities of this life is the same as Job's who said of the wicked: "Their prosperity is not in their own hands, so I stand aloof from the counsel of the wicked" (Job 21:16). Qoheleth says,

Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. Yet because the wicked do not fear God,

⁹⁵See Delitzsch, *Ecclesiastes*, 262 concerning a discussion of Qoheleth's use of טוב in 3:12.

it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow [8:12-13].⁹⁶

Qoheleth formed his world and life view with divine creation and divine retribution in mind. This creator-retributor perspective gives Qoheleth equilibrium and stability to dwell in a world subjected to the curse of God. The creation motif serves as the source of Qoheleth's counsel to celebrate life with joy, for it is a *good* creation of God. The eschatological judgment motif is behind his caution to behave obediently in view of the divine retribution which will reward the righteous and condemn the wicked. This counsel is gracefully harmonized by Qoheleth in his admonition to the young man:

Be happy young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment. So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigor are meaningless [11:9-10].

The joy and freedom of following one's desires is not to be dampened by knowledge of coming judgment but only controlled. This is not counsel to indulgent and indecent conduct but to freedom and joyful celebration of God's good gift of life, tempered by the knowledge that the God who created life also holds men accountable to revere him. The free pursuit of the heart's desires and whatever the eyes see is to be done within the moral boundaries of God's commandments (see 12:13). Qoheleth's counsel encourages one to celebrate life, unshackled from a search for the meaning of life.

Qoheleth Interpreted: The Epilogue

Upon concluding his graphic poem on aging and death, Qoheleth closes the body of his book with the theme with which he began: "‘Meaningless! Meaningless!’ says the Preacher. ‘Everything is meaningless!’" (12:8; cf. 1:2). But the verdict is not the final word that Qoheleth has for his readers. Instead, he leaves them with a closing word of counsel on how to behave in a world that is aimless and meaningless as the result of the Creator's curse upon it. That counsel is not in the least out of character with the theme of the book. He concludes, "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole

⁹⁶See Michael Eaton, *Ecclesiastes* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1983) 41-42. His comments are appropriate against those who presume an interpolated contradiction in these verses.

duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing whether it is good or evil" (12:13-14).

Qoheleth, throughout his book, had repeatedly raised the motif of eschatological judgment to motivate obedient behavior despite the fact that rotters advance in prosperity and live long in this world while the righteous flounder in their struggles and succumb early to the curse of death (cf. 3:16, 17; 5:4-7; 8:11-14; 11:9). The final judgment serves as a chief orientation to which Qoheleth directs his readers to steer them through the labyrinths of this meaningless life. The fear of God who shall judge men is to temper and regulate man's ethical actions and decisions throughout his sojourning here. And so it is appropriate that Qoheleth sums up the duty of man: "Fear God and keep his commandments" (12:13; cf. 3:14; 5:7; 7:18; and 8:12-13 three times).

Fearing God is motivated by the fact that "God will bring every deed into judgment." These two great themes, fearing God and an appointed time for divine judgment, serve as integral elements in the development of Qoheleth's world and life view. They were not mere addendas to a series of unconnected discursive sayings and affirmations. Rather, the conclusion serves as the knot which secures the ethical threads carefully woven into the fabric of the work. Qoheleth asserts this to be the case, for he says, "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter" (12:13a).

Consistent with his counsel throughout the book, Qoheleth does not permit his reader to despair even though "everything is meaningless." He counsels men to fear God and to obey him because there is a time for judgment when they will give account of their conduct and secrets, whether they be good or evil. These last words can hardly be taken in a crippling manner. Qoheleth did not design his words concerning the all-searching eye of God (v 14) to *inhibit* human enjoyment and behavior nor to cast his readers into *introspective* questioning of motives. Rather, knowledge of divine judgment should *regulate* one's conduct with a *prospective* gaze of expectation toward the day when justice shall eradicate all iniquity, when divine mercy shall purge out all oppression, when the righteous shall flourish as the wicked are cut off (cf. 3:16-17; 8:12-14).

Qoheleth's World and Life View Summarized

As Qoheleth made his thorough investigation (1:13) of all that is done under heaven, he was governed by basic presuppositional beliefs which are expressed throughout his work. These presuppositions largely arise out of his knowledge of God's revelation of himself in Genesis 1-11. Foundational to his philosophical pursuit of meaning is his firm recognition that the world with all its systems, and man in

particular as actor, operate under the curse of God. This he expresses in terms of things *twisted* and things *lacking* (1:15). The presence of evil is not to be attributed to the essence of creation but as a foreign element imposed upon it, for "Who can straighten what he [God] has made crooked?" (7:13). Furthermore, God did not capriciously impose this curse, but "God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes" (7:29). Thus, it is the curse which accounts for the inequity, the tyranny, the oppression, the disparity of providence, and especially for the presence of death and its haphazard encroachment without respect to men's characters (cf. 9:1-3).

This basic presuppositional belief that the world is not what it was *originally* nor what it will be *finally* governs Qoheleth's ethical world and life view. This is due to the fact that the transformation of the world is not accomplished by some evolutionary process inherent within creation itself, but by the God who created the universe and also subjected it to its present frustration under the curse and who will finally liberate it (cf. Rom 8:19-21).

For Qoheleth, then, there is a second and much more ultimate presupposition which regulates all his observations of this evil world and his wise counsel on how to live in it. The entire book rests solidly upon the assumption that the Lord God of Israel is the Creator and Governor of all things. He is the *Creator* who set all things into motion (12:1; 11:5). He is the *Sovereign* who governs all that he has created. He does not merely permit or allow the present suffering and evil in the world. Qoheleth acknowledges that it is God who *causes* both the good and the bad to befall men irrespective of their characters (7:14-15). It is God who gives a man wealth and yet may not give him the enjoyment of it, an evil which is vexing to men (6:1-2). Though it is God who gives both the good and the evil, he is not to be charged with doing evil; he is only to be feared precisely because of all that he does among men (3:14).

God is also perceived by Qoheleth as *Incomprehensible Wisdom*, for the creator/creature distinction, aggravated by the curse, hides God behind a frowning providence which hinders man from discovering life's meaning in this cursed world (3:11; 7:13-14; 8:16-17; 11:3-6). Man's knowledge of what God does as he observes the world is fractional and frustrated by the perplexing paradoxes. It is precisely this fact, namely, that almighty God has hidden his full character behind a disparate providence, that necessitates his special revelation.⁹⁷

⁹⁷Shank ("Qoheleth's World and Life View," 68) astutely states, "We must maintain, contrary to the majority of critical and conservative commentators, that Qoheleth's perception . . . refers to a knowledge which is a 'reflex-action' of his fear of God and which penetrates to the essence of the *meaning* of what this world of vanity is all about. . . . That perception also *includes* a deep, spiritual insight into the affects of the curse of God upon life and labor 'under the sun.'"

The antithetical quality of Qoheleth must be understood within this framework. The proposal of liberal critics that the oscillations of thought and expression are to be attributed either to a dialogue between two or more speakers or the result of glossators and redactors must be rejected.⁹⁸ Furthermore, the proposed solution of many conservative scholars also must be laid aside. The suggestion that Qoheleth's book is indicative of a man who wavers between secular and religious perspectives, oscillating to and fro, filled with doubts and perplexities, yet finally arising above them, has no true correspondence to the nature of Qoheleth. Even the attempt to resolve the paradoxical nature of the book by suggesting that the evils and inequities, of which the Preacher complains, are only an "apparent anomaly"⁹⁹ must be disallowed.

The paradoxical expressions and antithetical observations of God's disparate providence do not find their explanation from some internal struggle in Qoheleth between faith and reason. Nor are they resolved by postulating that they are the result of a dichotomy between sacred and secular perspectives. Rather, Qoheleth reflects the *real* world in its present state which is in conflict with the way it once was and the way it will be again. It is the curse, causing the twisting and incompleteness (1:15) of all things, that accounts for the dilemma which confronts man. Qoheleth hides no evil nor does he seek to deny it as merely apparent. He confronts the reality of evil and seeks to bring his readers to do the same. Yet, on the other hand, Qoheleth maintains an unwavering belief in the God who created and who will judge all men. For after all is said and done, it is God who has arranged the world as it is so that men will fear him (3:14).

Qoheleth does not shrink from acknowledging that it is God who has made both the good times and the bad (7:14). Yet, he never resorts to a fatalism which encourages either pious passivity or Epicurean indulgence. He takes the pathway of wisdom. The fact that God has inscrutably arranged this world under the perplexity and frustration of the curse, caused Qoheleth to declare, "Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future" (7:14b). Man is not to busy himself with the inscrutable. He is not to become occupied with trying to determine which course it is that is divinely chosen for him.

Qoheleth makes it clear that it is futile to seek to determine from the course of providential events whether or not divine approval rests upon one's amoral decisions, however great or small they may be.

⁹⁸Cf. Eaton, *Ecclesiastes*, 37-39.

⁹⁹See [Greene], "The Scope and Plan of Ecclesiastes," 424. This view is too much dominated by presuming that the final retribution cuts its line *now* with vividness. See also *ibid.*, 424-25. Cf. Kaiser, *Ecclesiastes*, 17.

Searching divine providence to determine one's course of action is not piety, but folly which leads to inactivity and failure. For "whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap" (11:4). The mystery of providence is unfathomable and inscrutable (11:5). "No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it" (8:17). Trying to discern providence will drive one mad, for it presumes that God's providence bears a direct and invariable correspondence to the events among men. Such misguided efforts cause men to turn upon God in bitterness or berate themselves when evil days befall them, thinking that suffering is always caused by particular sins.

Qoheleth counsels against "providence reading," for those who follow such a course fail to succeed at anything (11:4). Instead, since no man can know which endeavors will prove fruitful, the proper approach to life is to give oneself to the responsibilities at hand *with freedom and diligence*, and to await the course of events to determine one's success (11:6). All the days a man is given ought to be enjoyed (11:8), for "it is now that God favors what you do" (9:7b). Life is a divine gift to be enjoyed to its maximum as long as there is breath in the nostrils, for "even a live dog is better off than a dead lion" (9:4). Life is an endowment to be presently celebrated in the presence of the Creator (12:1). The enjoyment of life is to be the dominant motif of one's existence upon this earth, not the mercenary fixation of a miserly workman who hoards his earnings to satisfy his soul when he retires from his labors. The days of trouble come too quickly and unpredictably upon men eroding their pleasure and enjoyment (12:1-2). This perspective upon life is not sensual; it is realistic. It is governed by the fact that this world is cursed, and the ultimate curse is death (9:1, 3). Death is not something to be desired as a release from the prison of the body (as in Neoplatonism), for it wrenches man away from the environment in which he was designed to dwell (cf. Ps 115:16-17). Death is no friend but an enemy which violently tears a man apart, severing the spirit from the body (12:7). This is the perspective that the whole Bible takes upon death (cf. Isa 38:10-20; 2 Cor 5:1-5).

For Qoheleth, then, two opposing realities serve to motivate his expressions in 9:5-10: (1) the curse of death comes to every man, and (2) the gift of life is man's to be enjoyed to its fullest "all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun" (9:9). His whole description of the dead in 9:5-6 is defined carefully by him—"never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun" (9:6b). His interest is not to describe theologically the *state* of the dead (as Jehovah's Witnesses might contend), but he portrays the

dead in relation to this world; they have nothing more to do with it. It is for this reason that Qoheleth so often reiterates his celebration of life:

Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do. Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planting nor knowledge nor wisdom [9:7–10].

CONCLUSION

Qoheleth was no *enigmatic pessimist*. He was not a man who recorded the battle of tormenting and conflicting thoughts that raged inside his own mind as he oscillated between orthodox piety and indulgent secularism. Qoheleth was a *godly sage*. He was a righteous man regulated by his knowledge of and devout fear of the God of Israel. It is precisely because he was a God-fearing man that Qoheleth was capable of giving expression to such paradoxical and anomalous matters without denying the presence of evil in this world or without destroying his belief in God. Qoheleth records a godly man's reflections upon a cursed world subjected by God to vanity and frustration. It is the character of such a world which accounts for the polarized expressions and paradoxical observations in his book. It is precisely what one scholar dogmatically denied: "That the author of Ecclesiastes intended that the contrarities of his book should . . . reflect and image forth the chequered web of man's earthly condition, hopes alternating with fears, joys succeeded by sorrows, life contrasting with death."¹⁰⁰

What Paul asserts in a few words in Rom 8:19–21, Qoheleth investigates at length. Where Paul spoke generally, the Preacher descended to uncover the particulars. Though Paul had the privilege of knowing that Christ will restore all things and even now, in principle, has begun to do so (cf. 1 Cor 15:54–57), both he and Qoheleth share one biblical assessment of the character of this world and of life in it since the fall. It is cursed! It is disjointed! It is upside down! It is in bondage to decay! It is meaningless! It needs to be liberated!

What Qoheleth saw obscurely in the coming day of final retribution, the apostle Paul makes clear: "creation itself will be liberated

¹⁰⁰Tyler, *Ecclesiastes*, 54.

from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21). It is for the final redemption of God's people that creation awaits, for then will it be set free from what is now twisted and lacking (Qoh 1:15).

THE WATERS OF THE EARTH: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF PSALM 104:1-9

DAVID G. BARKER

Ps 104:6-9 is viewed as a reference to the flood of Noah, not the original creation week. Support for this interpretation is drawn from broad studies in the psalm's setting, literary structure, and grammar. Current literature on the psalm is brought into the discussion. The conclusion is drawn that the psalm displays a unique cosmology and a perspective including not only Yahweh's creative power, but also Yahweh's providential control in judgment and blessing. More specifically, Ps 104:8a speaks of the catastrophic tectonic activities associated with the Genesis flood.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

PSALM 104 is a majestic hymn of praise which extols Yahweh as creator and sustainer of the natural world. As a companion hymn to Psalm 103, it calls upon the individual worshiper to add his voice to the vast chorus of praise ascending to the very heavenly dwelling place of God.

The specific issue for discussion in this study is the meaning of vv 6-9. Most would argue that the psalm reflects the six day creation week of Genesis 1, and that the specific reference in Ps 104:6-9 is to the events of the first two days of the week which culminate in Gen 1:9. However, others have suggested that the Noachic flood is in view here, and that the psalm goes far beyond the limits of Genesis 1.

Additionally, a specific problem is encountered in the translation and interpretation of v 8a of the psalm. What is going up and down? Is it the waters or the mountains? If the former is accepted, both textual and imagery problems develop; if the latter, contextual problems arise.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is to determine if it is a viable alternative to interpret Ps 104:6-9 as a reference to the Noachic deluge. Additionally, it will seek to determine the best translation of v 8a in light of syntax, imagery and context. A more general purpose

of this study, however, is to exegete Ps 104:1-9 taking into consideration factors such as structure, setting, and literary history.

Essential to ascertaining the proper interpretation of Ps 104:6-9 is a broad analysis of the psalm in terms of its form, its setting in Israel's liturgy, and its literary relationships with similar ancient Near Eastern hymns. The first section of this study covers these areas. In particular, of great significance is the analysis of the psalm to determine if, in fact, the six day creation week forms the organizational skeleton, or if there are other structural analyses that would see the psalm in a broader perspective. Then the second section supplies an exegesis of vv 1-9 which is built upon the backgrounds and structural framework determined in the first section. The first five verses are included in this study in order to provide a preparatory textual analysis for the treatment of vv 6-9.

It is shown that vv 5-13 form an independent stanza of the psalm, with two subunits comprised of vv 5-9 and 10-13 respectively. Therefore, for the sake of completeness, vv 10-13 and their relationship to the previous subunit are summarized. The critical text for analysis is vv 6-9. Therefore, while the psalm is analyzed in its entirety for the purpose of ascertaining structure, the study basically limits itself to the first nine verses. While a thorough analysis of the entire psalm would obviously be profitable, a satisfactory solution to the problems noted above may be determined within the parameters outlined for this study.

THE SETTING OF PSALM 104

Several considerations must be taken into account when a study of the setting of Psalm 104 is undertaken. These may be enumerated as follows: (1) the question of the place of the psalm in the liturgy of Israel, (2) its literary relationship to other similar ancient Near Eastern hymns, (3) its literary relationship to the Genesis account of creation, and (4) an analysis of the structure of the psalm itself.

The Psalm in Israel's Liturgy

Allen argues that on the basis of the initial and final self exhortation, as well as the personal references in vv 33-34, the psalm can be characterized as an "individual hymn."¹ However, it has usually been assigned a role in the corporate worship of Israel as a self exhortation to praise which in turn was to inspire communal worship.² Several

¹Leslie K. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, in Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A. Hubbard, et al. (Waco, TX: Word, 1983) 28.

²Ibid.

have attempted to identify a specific setting for the psalm. Humbert links the psalm with some kind of Israelite autumn festival parallel with the Babylonian New Year Festival,³ though his position has not been widely accepted.⁴ Craigie argues for the setting of the dedication of Solomon's temple.⁵ He maintains that the psalm is firmly within the indigenous Hebrew poetic tradition, and that a reconstruction of 1 Kgs 8:12-13 based on the LXX reflects the imagery of Psalm 104.⁶ The first two lines of the Kings passage as reconstructed are viewed as reflecting Egyptian and Mesopotamian sun hymns⁷ with a polemic intent. Additionally, he believes that the last two lines reflect the adaptation of a Ugaritic Baal myth with, however, a retention of the distinctive Hebrew theology concerning the temple as a dwelling place for Yahweh. These same motifs are evident in Psalm 104; hence, its association with Solomon's temple dedication.⁸ Nevertheless, the evidence both for the reconstruction of the Kings text and the association of Psalm 104 with Solomon's Temple dedication is rather tenuous. Certainly, there is nothing that militates against an early date for the psalm, but the attempt to be this precise is somewhat precarious.

Crüsemann has contended for a late date and non-cultic setting for the psalm based on the mixed nature of the form of the hymn (plural summons, self exhortation, etc.).⁹ However, several lines of evidence have been forwarded which favor a pre-exilic date. These include the preterite use of the imperfect, the use of הִיָּתוֹ in vv 11 and 20, and perhaps the usage of זֶה as a relative pronoun in vv 8 and 26 (cf. אֲשֶׁר in vv 16, 17).¹⁰

It should be noted that Psalm 103 opens and closes in the same way as Psalm 104 and is attributed to David. Psalm 104 is untitled except in the LXX which attributes it to David, and claims have been made that the LXX should be accepted because of the common opening and closing invocations. However, the common structure is reason enough to explain their juxtaposition in the psalter and

³P. Humbert, "La relation de Genèse et du Psaume 104 avec la liturgie du Nouvel-An israélite," *RHPR* 15 (1935) 22-27.

⁴See in particular A. van der Voort, "Genèse 1:1 à 2:4a et Psaume 104," *RB* 58 (1951) 343-45.

⁵Peter C. Craigie, "The Comparison of Hebrew Poetry: Psalm 104 in Light of Egyptian and Ugaritic Poetry," *Semitics* 4 (1974) 19.

⁶*Ibid.*, 10, 19.

⁷For examples of such hymns, see the "Hymn to Aton" (*ANET*, 369-71) and the "Shamash Hymn" (*ANET*, 389-90).

⁸Craigie, "Comparison," 10, 19.

⁹F. Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (WMANT 32; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1969) 301-2.

¹⁰Cf. D. A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (SBLDS 3; Missoula: Scholars, 1972) 42-43, 54, 63, 77; cf. Allen, *Psalms*, 29.

common authorship is in no way required.¹¹ Thus, the hymn seems to have been a companion hymn to Psalm 103 which then may very well place it into the Davidic liturgical setting.

The Psalm in Relation to ANE Hymnology

Recent scholarship has stressed the resemblances between this psalm and Ahkenaton's Hymn to the Sun (14th C. B.C.).¹² The references to lions creeping about at night (vv 20–21; cf. lines 17–20), man's daytime activities (vv 22–23; cf. lines 27–29), the contentment of animals and birds (vv 11–14; cf. lines 30–36), activities of creatures and ships of the sea (vv 25–26; cf. lines 37–40), the adulation of the creator by creation (v 24; cf. lines 58–60), the dependence of man upon God (v 27; cf. lines 66–67), waters and mountains (vv 6, 10; cf. lines 66–67), and finally the life giving character of the divine being (vv 29–30; cf. lines 108–9),¹³ all seem to indicate some kind of literary relationship.

Some have tried to prove a direct relationship between Akhenaton's hymn and the psalm.¹⁴ Breasted states, "The hymn of Ikhnaton thus reveals to us the source of the Hebrew Psalmist's recognition of the gracious goodness of God in the maintenance of his creatures, even the most insignificant."¹⁵

While most commentators stress some kind of relationship, caution is usually expressed. Dahood and others posit a Canaanite mediation of the hymn.¹⁶ It is postulated that the Phoenicians, because of their close commercial and cultural contact with Egypt, brought the hymn into their own literary history, and that the Hebrews obtained it from the Phoenicians.¹⁷ Bernhardt argues, on the basis of both theological and cosmological differences, that the relationship is quite general. He maintains that there was a similar literary *Gattung* in ancient Egypt and that it is not necessary to suggest that the psalmist

¹¹Allen, *Psalms*, 26.

¹²ANET, 369–71.

¹³Cf. *ibid.*, 370–71; also Allen, *Psalms*, 29.

¹⁴Crüsemann, *Studien*, 287; James Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience* (New York: Charles Scribners', 1933), 366–70; A. Weigall, *The Life and Times of Akhnaton, Pharaoh of Egypt* (revised; London: Butterworth, 1922), 134–36.

¹⁵Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*, 368.

¹⁶M. Dahood, *Psalms III, 101–150* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970) 33; cf. Georges Nagel, "A propos des rapports du psaume 104 avec les textes égyptiens," *Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet*, ed. O. Eissfeldt, et al. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950) 395–403; H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (BKAT 15:2.5; Ausgabe, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978) 880; and Pierre Auffert, "Note sur la structure littéraire du Psaume 104 et ses incidences pour une comparaison avec l'Hymne à Aton et Gen 1," *RSR* (1982) 73–82.

¹⁷Dahood, *Psalms III*, 33.

had a specific knowledge of the Egyptian hymn.¹⁸ Craigie argues from a similar angle, maintaining that common motifs, subject matter, and intent will naturally result in similar hymns.¹⁹ As noted previously, he finds parallels in other Egyptian sun hymns, a Mesopotamian hymn to Shamash, and in particular, the Ugaritic Baal myth.²⁰ However, he maintains that this may well indicate an association of ideas rather than a literary relationship.²¹ Craigie's thesis, particularly concerning the Ugaritic Baal myth, is built heavily upon the reconstruction of the 1 Kgs 8:12-13 text, and upon the fact that Phoenician craftsmen were used in the construction of the temple. This latter fact causes Craigie to see the psalm as a polemic against the theology of Baal. This may well be so, but it does not prove the literary dependence he seeks to demonstrate.

Kidner is aware of the various similarities between Ahkenaton's hymn and the psalm, but also aptly notes the wide divergences between the two, both in content and theology. He states, "Theologically, it displays the incalculable difference between worshipping the sun and worshipping its Maker; indeed the psalm's apparent allusions to this famous hymn seem designed to call attention to this very point."²² Hence, there is no reason to suggest literary dependence upon these pagan hymns or borrowing of theological concepts and ideas. A description by the psalmist of the natural world inevitably leads to ideas and imagery common to religious expression but which also can be used as an apology for the true God and a polemic against false gods.

The Psalm in Relation to Genesis

That there is some relationship to the Genesis account of creation is obvious. Sequences are largely the same and there is an overlap of vocabulary.²³ Kidner maintains that the psalm is modelled "fairly closely" on Genesis 1 and that the stages of creation are starting points for praise within the psalm.²⁴

However, the nature and extent of this relationship is not so obvious. Allen observes that there is a basic difference in style—the psalm is exuberant and free while Genesis is schematic and logical.

¹⁸K. H. Bernhardt, "Amenhophis IV and Psalm 104," *MIO* 15 (1969) 205-6.

¹⁹Craigie, "Comparison," 13-15.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*, 21.

²²Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1975), 367-68.

²³*Ibid.*, 368.

²⁴Cf. Kidner's chart (*Ibid.*) and also Allen's brief discussion (*Psalms*, 31).

There are also some differences in the order of events, particularly concerning men and animals.²⁵

Humbert argues that Psalm 104 depends upon Genesis,²⁶ while van der Voort argues, on the basis of various differences and the use of anthropomorphisms, that Genesis reflects the use of the psalm.²⁷ Craigie and Anderson opt for a mediating position of a common cultic origin for both texts.²⁸ From a more conservative perspective, one would have to acknowledge the priority of the Genesis text.²⁹

However, of greater concern for this study is the commonly accepted notion that the psalm reflects only the days of creation as recorded in Gen 1:1–2:3. Fullarton argues that the sequence of the creative days is “the most outstanding factor in the structure of the psalm.”³⁰ Kidner also develops his whole discussion around the days of creation and says that later scenes in the psalm develop initial glimpses with the result that there is a mingling and overlapping of the creation days as described in Genesis.³¹ Yet as these various analyses are examined, one quickly finds that the attempt to relegate the psalm to such strictures is artificial. Some emend the text to fit their preconceived structure,³² while others excuse sections that do not precisely fit the pattern on the basis of an exuberant style or poetic license.³³

Therefore, one suspects that while Genesis 1 may be in view, this does not exhaust the full intent and content of the hymn. Rather, it is apparent that the psalm goes beyond the creation motif into a more general motif of providential preservation of the world by God. This not only explains statements regarding God’s general preservation of creation, but also explains references to the destruction of his creation through the global catastrophe of the Noachic deluge, an integral part of ancient Hebrew cosmology.

²⁵ Allen, *Psalms*, 31.

²⁶ Humbert, “La relation,” 21.

²⁷ van der Voort, “Genèse 1:1 à 2:4a,” 341–46.

²⁸ Craigie, “Comparison,” 18; A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 2 (NCB; Greenwood: Attic, 1972) 717.

²⁹ Cf. Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 368; and F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, vol. 3 trans. Francis Bolton in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 127. It is far beyond the scope of this study to discuss the date and authorship of the Pentateuch. A Mosaic authorship and 15th century B.C. date for the Pentateuch is assumed for purposes of this study, which *de facto* results in the priority of Genesis over most of the psalmic materials.

³⁰ Kemper Fullarton, “The Feeling for Form in Psalm 104,” *JBL* 40 (1921) 43.

³¹ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 368.

³² As does Fullarton, “Feeling for Form,” 48, who in turn accuses Gunkel, Staerk, Duham, Briggs and others of going too far in this regard.

³³ As does Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 368.

The next logical step, therefore, is an analysis of the structure of the psalm to determine whether it can be structurally limited to the creation narrative.

Literary Analyses of the Psalm

As Allen observes, little specific work has been done on the structure of the psalm.³⁴ Paragraph divisions are usually assigned on the basis of apparent thought changes with little regard for internal textual criteria.³⁵

An early analysis was suggested by Fullarton who manipulated the material in order to fit in the first five days of the creation week of Genesis. He states, "The key to the analysis is, of course, the first chapter of Genesis."³⁶ He is rather free in his handling of the text, transposing vv 16 and 17 to fit between vv 11 and 12 in stanza 3 (vv 10-12),³⁷ and suggesting that v 18 was added when the last part of stanza 4 (vv 13-15) was lost.³⁸ Obviously there is a measure of artificiality here, since there is no attempt to establish the structure from internal textual data.

Kidner also maintains that the psalm is structured around the creation week.³⁹ Day 1 is seen in v 2a; day 2 in 2b-4; day 3 in 5-9 with elaboration in 10-18; day 4 in 19-23 and perhaps 24; day 5 in 25-26 (but only the sea); and day 6 is "anticipated" in 21-24 and discussed in 27-28 (and perhaps 29-30) in terms of "food appointed for all creatures."⁴⁰ As noted previously, he recognizes that the days of Genesis overlap and mingle and that the days of creation are only starting points for the creation drama.⁴¹ Yet there is still a measure of artificiality in his attempt to impose the structure of Genesis 1 on the psalm.

Recently, however, two studies have suggested structural formulations for the psalm. Alden postulates a ten-strophe chiasmic structure shown by the following pattern:⁴²

³⁴Allen, *Psalms*, 31.

³⁵E.g., G. R. Driver, "The Resurrection of Marine and Terrestrial Creatures," *JSS* 7 (1962) 22; cf. also E. Beauchamp, "Structure strophique des Psaumes" *RevScRel* 58 (1968) 199-223.

³⁶Fullarton, "Feeling for Form," 45.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 47.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 48.

³⁹Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, 368.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²Robert L. Alden, "Chiasmic Psalms III: A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 101-150," *JETS* 21 (1978) 201.

- 1 A Bless the LORD, O my soul.
 2-14 B God's creation of the land and what is on it.
 15 C The benefits to man
 16-18 D The benefits to animals
 19a E The moon
 19b E The sun
 20-22 D Animals work at night
 23 C Man works in the daytime
 24-32 B God's creation of the seas and what is in them.
 33-35 A Bless the LORD, O my soul.

He observes that the B stanzas are long, but notes several key terms that seemingly tie them together.⁴³ The major criticisms of this analysis are the relative imbalance of the various stanzas and the rather novel determinations of the boundaries of the stanzas.

Allen has suggested a five-strophe structure with subdivisions of the central three units.⁴⁴ His analysis may be schematized as follows:

- A vv 1-4
 B vv 5-13
 b₁ vv 5-9
 b₂ vv 10-13
 C vv 14-23
 c₁ vv 14-18
 c₂ vv 19-23
 B' vv 24-30
 b₁ vv 24-26
 b₂ vv 27-30
 A' vv 31-35

Several factors that Allen notes need to be emphasized. First, the term **עֲשֵׂה** ends strophe A and begins strophe A'; it also ends strophe B and begins strophe B'; finally it stands in the middle of strophe C (v 19). Second, the divine name **יְהוָה** in strophes A and A' serve to indicate their complementary nature. Third, the repetition of the terms **אֲדָם** and **עֲבֹדָה** in both vv 14 and 23 indicate an *inclusio*, marking the limits of the central strophe (C). A similar phenomenon is observable with the repetition of the term **אֶרֶץ** in vv 5 and 13, again indicating an *inclusio* and marking the limits of strophe B, as well as a central instance of the term at v 9. Additionally, a clear theme dominates strophe B as indicated by the fourfold repetition of the term **הָרִים**. Finally, clear indications of a new thought are observable by the exclamation at v 24 (beginning strophe B') and the expression of the wish at v 31 (beginning strophe A').⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Allen, *Psalms*, 32.

Allen's presentation is quite convincing, especially in light of the fact that it essentially retains the more traditional subdivisions (such as in *BHS*), yet puts them into structural perspective. Allen concludes, "The common exegetical divisions are thus vindicated by and large, but their role within the overall structure has hitherto been missed."⁴⁵

This particular analysis has clear implications for the present study. As noted earlier, commentators have insisted that the psalm essentially reflects the six day creation week of Gen 1:1–2:3. However, while the events of the six day creation week may be reflected in the material, these events are not the skeleton upon which the psalm is constructed. The hymn goes beyond the stricture of Genesis 1 into a statement of Yahweh's general relationship to the world, both as creator and sustainer (cf. Col 1:16–17). When the artificial limiting of the scope of the psalm to the creation event in Israel's cosmology is removed, God's general providence throughout history can be seen. This opens the way for seeing vv 6–9 in particular as a reference to the great deluge of Genesis 6–9.

For purposes of this study, therefore, Allen's structural analysis has been adopted and applied directly to the verses under study.

Summary

It may be stated in summary that although the date and provenience of the psalm are uncertain, there is no reason to relegate it to the post-exilic era.

Second, although there are resemblances to other ancient Near Eastern hymns, there is no convincing evidence to suggest that the psalm is either directly or indirectly dependent upon such sources. Rather, similarities arise from common imagery and intent. The theology of Psalm 104 is vastly different from the other ancient Near Eastern materials and one must conclude that there was an autonomous literary development. This is not to say that the hymn was composed in a vacuum, but that the theological concepts are founded in the moral and ethical monotheism of the Hebrew faith.

Third, there is an obvious literary relationship to the Genesis account of creation. However, from a structural analysis, it is clear that the psalm cannot be restricted to the scope of Genesis 1. Rather, the psalm describes the creative and providential acts of Yahweh in the world.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF PSALM 104:1-9

As stated at the outset, the primary purpose of this study is to determine the significance of the psalmist's statements concerning Yahweh's activities in relation to the waters described in vv 6-9. It has already been established structurally that the psalm speaks of more than the creation week of Genesis. Now it becomes necessary to examine the text in detail to determine more precisely the intent of the psalmist.

An Outline of the Psalm

Based on Allen's analysis, the following broad outline has been developed:

- 1A. Prologue: Yahweh is introduced as the majestic and sovereign God of the created universe (vv 1-4)
- 2A. Stanza 1: Yahweh uses the waters of the earth both to destroy and to sustain the creation (vv 5-13)
 - 1b. The waters of the earth once covered the earth but now are established in their place (vv 5-9)
 - 2b. The waters of the earth now provide for all of Yahweh's creation (vv 10-13)
- 3A. Stanza 2: Yahweh providentially controls and provides for the world of man (vv 14-23)
 - 1b. This providential care extends to the vegetation of the earth by which provision is made for man's joy and strengthening (vv 14-18)
 - 2b. This providential care extends to the control of the heavens by which both human and animal activities are regulated (vv 19-23)
- 4A. Stanza 3: Yahweh is in total sovereign control of the world, both in its creation and in its sustaining (vv 24-30)
 - 1b. This sovereign activity created the waters upon and in which ships and living creatures exist (vv 24-26)
 - 2b. This sovereign activity determines life and death for all of creation (vv 27-30)
- 5A. Epilogue: Praise to Yahweh for his powerful creative and providential activities (vv 31-35)

Outline of Verses 1-13

Since this study is primarily concerned with vv 6-9, a more precise outline has been developed for the prologue and first stanza.

- 1A. Prologue: Yahweh is introduced as the majestic and sovereign God of the created universe (vv 1-4)
 - 1b. Invocation (v 1a)
 - 2b. A statement of Yahweh's greatness and majesty (v 1bc)

- 3b. A description of Yahweh's greatness and majesty (vv 2–4)
 - 1c. Yahweh's regal attire (v 2a)
 - 2c. Yahweh's regal tent (v 2b)
 - 3c. Yahweh's regal chambers (v 3a)
 - 4c. Yahweh's regal chariot (v 3b)
 - 5c. Yahweh's regal walk (v 3c)
 - 6c. Yahweh's regal messengers (v 4)
- 2A. Stanza 1: Yahweh uses the waters of the earth both to destroy and to sustain the creation (vv 5–13)
 - 1b. The waters of the earth once covered the earth, but now are established in their place (vv 5–9)
 - 1c. The earth is founded (v 5)
 - 2c. The earth undergoes a deluge of water (vv 6–9)
 - 1d. The waters cover the earth (v 6)
 - 2d. The waters flee from the surface of the earth (vv 7–8)
 - 3d. The waters are established in their place (v 9)
 - 2b. The waters of the earth now provide for all of Yahweh's creation (vv 10–13)
 - 1c. The act of Yahweh in providing water for sustenance (v 10)
 - 2c. A specific statement from grateful recipients for such provision (vv 11–12)
 - 3c. A general statement of the creation's satisfaction for God's care (v 13)

Textual Analysis

PROLOGUE: Yahweh is introduced as the majestic and sovereign God of the created universe (vv 1–4)

Invocation (v 1a)

The anonymous introductory phrase אֶת־יְהוָה נִפְשִׁי כָרַכִּי is repeated at the end of the psalm (v 35) forming an *inclusio*. This establishes the psalm as a hymn of praise to Yahweh, with particular emphasis upon individual praise as indicated by the term נִפְשִׁי.⁴⁷ The term נִפְשִׁי is probably best rendered by the term “person” or “self,” or even simply by the personal pronoun.⁴⁸ Hence, the psalmist is calling upon himself to praise Yahweh. At the same time it should be remembered that the psalm was in all likelihood sung as a corporate expression of praise in temple worship.⁴⁹

The term כָרַכִּי, a piel imperative from כָּרַךְ, means to “bless, praise, salute.”⁵⁰ Oswalt states that to bless in the OT means “to endue with

⁴⁷Ibid., 28.

⁴⁸Bruce K. Waltke, “נִפְשִׁי,” *TWOT* 2:590.

⁴⁹Allen, *Psalms*, 28.

⁵⁰BDB, 138.

power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity etc.”⁵¹ However, when used in acknowledgement of Israel’s covenant God, the emphasis is upon praise for Yahweh and his saving activities on behalf of Israel or the individual worshiper.⁵² Hence, the psalm begins with a personal invocation for praise for Yahweh’s mighty and majestic acts in the world of man.

A Statement of Yahweh’s Greatness and Majesty (v 1bc)

This unit is identifiable by the usage of two perfect verbs (גָּדַלְתָּ, לְבַשְׁתָּ; note the following participles in v 2). After an introductory self-appropriation of Yahweh as the psalmist’s personal God,⁵³ the psalmist makes a straightforward attributive statement, גָּדַלְתָּ מְאֹד, followed by a metaphorical statement, הוֹד וְהָדָר לְבָשֶׁתָּ. The terms הוֹד and הָדָר seem to have been chosen for their literary assonance and contain clear royal connotations (cf. Job 40:10; Ps 96:6). Thus royal imagery is consistent with the descriptions that are to follow (cf. vv 2–4). Delitzsch observes הוֹד וְהָדָר is not the glory that belongs to God (as Jude 25), but rather it is the glory that he has put on.⁵⁴ The psalmist is seeing the greatness of Yahweh in terms of his actions rather than his essential being. His actions, however, reflect his essential being, particularly his sovereignty over the universe. The metaphorical usage of לְבַשְׁתָּ effectively anticipates the subsequent descriptions of the divine theophany as covered and housed by the components of nature.

A Description of Yahweh’s Greatness and Majesty (vv 2–4)

Following a clear statement of the greatness and royal majesty of Yahweh, the psalmist employs six participles to describe his God. These participles not only indicate further characteristics of Yahweh, but the change from the perfect (v 1b) to participles (vv 2–4) delineates separate structural units within the prologue.

Allen sees עָטָה as parallel with לְבַשְׁתָּ and observes that there is a problem created by the participial form. He argues that the synonymous content of 1c and 2a point to a bicolon, and so suggests the proposed emendation תַּעֲטָה based on haplography. He states that such a change “while not essential, would ease the problem.”⁵⁵ How-

⁵¹ John N. Oswalt, “בָּרַךְ,” *TWOT* 1:132.

⁵² Josef Scharbert, “בָּרַךְ,” *TDOT* 2:286, 293.

⁵³ DSS 11QPs^a reads אֱלֹהֵינוּ making it more of a communal statement; cf. J. A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1967) 160.

⁵⁴ Delitzsch, *Psalms III*, 128.

⁵⁵ Allen, *Psalms*, 26. The emendation comes from H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (HKAT 2.2.4; Ausgabe, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1926) 454; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 879; and Crüsemann, *Studien*, 287, n. 2. Cf. also *BHS* apparatus, 1183.

ever, Allen has failed to take into account the nature of the six participial statements as introduced by 1bc. If one recognizes the statement and preparatory metaphor (as discussed above), there is no difficulty in taking the text as it stands.

Yahweh's Regal Attire (v 2a). As light was the first creation after the initial creation of an unformed and unfilled chaos (Gen 1:1-2), so the psalmist portrays the creator, first and foremost, as royally clad in light. The term *עָטָה* means to "wrap oneself, enwrap, envelop oneself."⁵⁶ In Ps 104:2a, then, Yahweh is portrayed as almost totally controlled by or identified as light (cf. Jer 43:12). Hence, this fundamental element of the natural world is relegated to merely being a part of Yahweh's garb—one may see the first hint of a polemic against the common sun worship that surrounded the Hebrews.

The term for garment here, *שָׂמְלָה*, often rendered *שַׂמְלָה*,⁵⁷ means a "wrapper" or "mantle," usually referring to the outer cloak.⁵⁸ Dahood notes *כְּשָׂמְלָה* literally reads "as the garment," but observes on the basis of Pss 55:23; 85:13; 89:48; and 90:16 that the article may serve as a substitute for the pronominal suffix.⁵⁹ Hence, with Dahood (*contra KJV* and *NASB*) the line should read in the third person, "who is robed with the sun [?] as his garment."⁶⁰ This accords well with the third person configuration of the subsequent lines.

Dahood further calls *אֵר* "an accusative of material-with-which",⁶¹ hence the rendering "who is robed with. . . ." However, to translate *אֵר* as "sun" seems rather bold since there is nothing in the context to demand this translation and the evidence adduced by Dahood for this translation is less than convincing.⁶² Habel observes that "light is the theophanic mode of self manifestation which both reveals his presence and veils his holiness."⁶³

Yahweh's Regal Tent (v 2b). The psalmist next describes the abode of the royal creator in terms of a tent curtain. The term *יָרִיעַ*, while communicating the panoramic sense involved in the idea of heavens, reminds the worshiper of Yahweh's presence in the tabernacle. Hence, the stretching out of the heavens as a tent not only

⁵⁶BDB, 741.

⁵⁷Cf. *ibid.*, 971.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹Dahood, *Psalms III*, 34.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 31.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 34.

⁶²*Ibid.* The only text that could in any way support Dahood's suggestion is Job 31:6 where there is a clear context of moon and sun. Such a context is not present in Psalm 104.

⁶³N. C. Habel, "He Who Stretches out the Heavens," *CBQ* 34 (1974) 422.

speaks of Yahweh's creative act but also directs attention to his personal abode. Such a phrase serves to portray Yahweh "as the creator who pitches the heavens to be an overarching tent within which he appears in luminous splendor."⁶⁴

Based on his suggestion that נֹטֶה should be emended to נֹטֶה־נֹטֶה , Allen assumes haplography again and emends נֹטֶה to נֹטֶה־נֹטֶה in accordance with *BHK*, *BHS*, and Kraus.⁶⁵ However, Allen's first suggestion was shown to be questionable; thus to have an anarthrous נֹטֶה accords well with the anarthrous עֹטֶה . Dahood further observes, "In ḥōṭēh and $nōṭēh$ are present fine rhyme and assonance. Hence the recommendation of *BHS* to add the article to $nōṭēh$ (*hannoṭēh*) may be declined without qualms."⁶⁶

Yahweh's Regal Chambers (v 3a). The description of the great Yahweh, clothed with honor and majesty, continues by means of hymnic participles. However, at this point the participles become arthrous (forming the basis of some of Allen's suggestions). Yet Delitzsch aptly notes the fact that determinate participles alternating with anarthrous participles (cf. Isa 44:24–28) indicate no more "than that the former are more predicative and the latter more attributive."⁶⁷

The imagery portrayed here is that of a celestial palace whose foundation beams are laid in the waters. Presumably, based on the context of "light" (2a), "heavens" (2b), "clouds" (3b), and "wind" (3c), the waters are heavenly waters (cf. Amos 9:6). Kidner observes, "The dizzy height of 'the waters above the firmament,' or the clouds, is pictured as but the base of God's abode, and this insubstantial support quite sufficient for the ethereal lightness of His palace."⁶⁸

The term הַמִּקְרָה is apparently a denominative verb coming from קָרָה meaning "rafter" or "beam."⁶⁹ Both ideas, however, seem to derive from the verb קָרָה meaning "encounter, meet, befall."⁷⁰ Hence, the rafter or beam is that which meets or encounters some kind of structural support.

Dahood attempts to link the Hebrew term with a Ugaritic term *qryt* and Akkadian term *qarītu*, both meaning "granary."⁷¹ Hence, he suggests the translation, "Who stored with water his upper chambers." This, he argues, is congruent with the imagery of v 13. Additionally,

⁶⁴Ibid., 423.

⁶⁵Kraus, *Psalmen*, 879.

⁶⁶Dahood, *Psalms III*, 33.

⁶⁷Delitzsch, *Psalms III*, 128.

⁶⁸Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 369; cf. Delitzsch, *Psalms III*, 128–29 for similar suggestions.

⁶⁹BDB, 900.

⁷⁰Ibid., 899.

⁷¹Dahood, *Psalms III*, 34.

he adduces Job 37:9 in which קָרָה occurs (normally translated "cold" from קָרָר; cf. *KJV* and *NASB*). He translated this text, "Out of the chamber comes the tempest, and flowing waters[?] out of the store-room."⁷²

While Dahood's suggestion is plausible, the major argument against it is that to make this simply a statement of Yahweh storing water in the upper chambers would destroy the imagery describing Yahweh's regal chambers and thus the polemic involved. Additionally, as Habel notes, "these chambers are constructed 'in' the waters as might be expected from similar motifs pertaining to celestial store-houses or firmaments (Gen 1:6-8; Amos 9:6; Job 38:22)."⁷³ Hence, the more traditional rendering will be retained.

The term עֲלִיּוֹתָיו is derived from the common verb עָלָה, and has the idea of a roof chamber or upper chamber (cf. Judg 3:23-25; 2 Kgs 4:10; 23:12; etc.). Hence, the picture is that of Yahweh's heavenly palace placed in the sky. His abode is above the celestial waters.

Yahweh's Regal Chariot (v 3b). Dahood argues that the force of עַל in the phrase הָמָהֶלֶךְ עַל-כְּנָפֵי-רִיחַ (v 3c) extends to הַשָּׁמַיִם-עֲבִיִּים (v 3b) resulting in the translation "who sets his chariot upon the clouds."⁷⁴ He is attempting to distinguish between Yahweh being transported *by* the clouds and Yahweh driving his chariot *across* the heavens.⁷⁵ However, the suggestion is grammatically unprecedented, and additionally, Baal is called "the Rider of the Clouds."⁷⁶ Yahweh is the true master of the heavens; it is *he* who rides the clouds.

Yahweh's Regal Walk (v 3c). Again, polemic imagery is being used here. Yahweh is master of the storm. The prepositional phrase עַל-כְּנָפֵי-רִיחַ clearly speaks of Yahweh as creator and portrays his majestic and regal dominion of the atmospheric elements. The identical phrase appears in Ps 18:10[11], in a context of Yahweh's majesty of the created world. Hence, celestial forces are subjects of the divine creator and sovereign.⁷⁷

Yahweh's Regal Messengers (v 4). The final description of Yahweh has, in contrast to the previous five descriptions, a dual predicate to the initial participle עֹשֶׂה. The predicative phrases are

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Habel, "He who Stretches out," 423.

⁷⁴Dahood, *Psalms III*, 34.

⁷⁵Cf. S. Mowinkel, "Drive and/or Ride in the Old Testament," *VT* 12 (1962) 278-99.

⁷⁶*ANET*, 132.

⁷⁷Habel, "He who Stretches out," 422.

very similar and clearly עֲשֵׂה is implied from the first line to the second.

However, several problems are apparent. First, אֵשׁ לֶהֱט is apparently improperly coordinated with מְשַׁרְהֵי in terms of number. Dahood attempts to reconcile this by taking אֵשׁ and לֶהֱט as two separate nouns coordinated by asyndeton ('fire and flame' [cf. Joel 2:3]).⁷⁸ Similarly *BHS* suggests an emendation to אֵשׁ וְלֶהֱט.⁷⁹ Dahood rejects the insertion of the ו on the basis of meter.⁸⁰ Probably the best suggestion comes from Allen and others who suggest that אֵשׁ may have been considered a collective noun.⁸¹

Second, אֵשׁ is usually regarded as a feminine noun, and thus לֶהֱט is improperly coordinated with respect to gender. 11QPs^a eliminates the problem by reading לֶהֱטֵה.⁸² However, since improper coordination of gender is not all that infrequent in the Hebrew text,⁸³ it would seem best to allow the MT to stand.

Finally, the major problem is that of determining the direct object of the participle עֲשֵׂה. Contextually it seems clear that רוחות and אֵשׁ לֶהֱט should be direct objects so that the psalmist would be continuing to see nature as Yahweh's instrument: "He makes the winds his messengers, Flaming fire his ministers" (*NASB*). However, the LXX grammatically reverses the sentence: 'Ο ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα. Additionally, the author of Hebrews cites the LXX rendition in Heb 1:7. Kidner sees no contextual difficulty with this rendering which has the psalmist looking beyond the natural order of things to the heavenly host.⁸⁴ He further argues that the normal word order favors the LXX and notes that the argument of Heb 1:7ff. is based on this rendering.⁸⁵

Yet as Allen notes, the LXX rendering is contextually improbable.⁸⁶ The psalmist is describing how the sovereign God of the universe is master of all natural forces and how he uses them to enhance his glory or to perform his service. Hence it would seem best to render v 4 with *NASB*. The LXX, therefore, with its tendency to spiritualize and elevate the supernatural, took the verse in the alternative sense, and the author of Hebrews, in making his point concerning

⁷⁸Dahood, *Psalms III*, 35.

⁷⁹*BHS*, 1183.

⁸⁰Dahood, *Psalms III*, 35.

⁸¹Allen, *Psalms*, 26; cf. GKC, 463. Delitzsch observes that this word has no plural (*Psalms III*, 129).

⁸²Cf. Y. Yadin, "Another Fragment (E) of the Psalms Scroll from Qumran Cave 11 (11QPsa^a)," *Textus* 5 (1966) 1-10.

⁸³Cf. GKC, 459-67.

⁸⁴Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, 369.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 369, n. 2.

⁸⁶Allen, *Psalms*, 26.

Christ and the angels to his readers, used a text known to them. That Christ and the apostles used the LXX, even in places where it is at variance with the MT, is a well known fact. Apparently, they felt that they could make their point without compulsion to correct and clarify the difference between the Hebrew and Greek texts. McCullough observes that the author of Hebrews in particular may have deliberately used the version known to the local church to which he was writing in order to avoid confusion or opposition.⁸⁷ Thus, there is no evidence that would demand an adjustment of the more natural and contextual rendering of the MT in favor of the LXX or its citation in the NT.

Summary

Ps 104:2–4 describes Yahweh's greatness and majesty. It is interesting to note that the terms used in this description (upper waters, clouds, wind, and flaming fire [lightning]) collectively portray a common thunderstorm. This serves both to heighten its polemical value, and to prepare the worshiper for the description of the watery cataclysm which follows in the subsequent stanza.

STANZA 1: Yahweh uses the waters of the earth both to destroy and to sustain the creation (vv 5–13)

As noted in the outline, this stanza may be divided into two smaller units, the first discussing the use of water to destroy the earth in the past, and the second indicating the use of water to sustain the earth in the present. The parameters of this study necessitate emphasis upon the first subunit.

The scene changes from the heavens to the earth. In the prologue Yahweh is praised as the sovereign of the heavens which serve as his celestial tabernacle.⁸⁸ Even the storm with its wind, lightning, clouds, and waters is mastered by him. In this stanza Yahweh is portrayed as sovereign of the earth. The connection between the two is that the

⁸⁷John C. McCullough, "The Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews," *NTS* 26 (1980) 379. To go into the occurrences and ramifications of the use of the LXX in the NT is beyond the scope of this study. A selected bibliography, particularly for Hebrews, is included by S. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Amsterdam: Van Soest, 1961); K. J. Thomas, "Old Testament Citations in Hebrews," *NTS* (1965) 303–25; G. Howard, "Hebrews and the Old Testament Quotations," *NovT* 10:2–3 (1968) 208–16; and James W. Thompson, "Structure and Purpose of the Catena in Hebrews 1:5–13," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 352–63.

⁸⁸Cf. Habel, "He who Stretches out," 417–30 for thorough discussion of this concept.

rain and storms portrayed in the prologue provide the water by which Yahweh's activities are performed in the following stanza.

The Waters of the Earth Once Covered the Earth,
But Now are Established in Their Place (vv 5–9)

Two movements are observable in this stanza. The first (v 5) is introductory, and establishes the setting for the new scene. The second (vv 6–9) is descriptive, and elaborates upon Yahweh's use of the waters to destroy the earth.

The Earth is Founded (v 5). A significant change in verbal aspect is seen in the term יָסַד. Since this is a Qal perfect, it interrupts the participial chain of vv 2–4. Most commentators want to repoint the term to יָסַד as supported by LXX^A, LXX^L, and the Targums⁸⁹ and thus continue the hymnic participles. However, there is a major shift of scene from the heavens to the earth. The psalmist has highlighted this shift by a break in the verbal pattern. Thus, there is justification to retain the pointing of the MT.

The metaphorical expression יָסַד-אֶרֶץ עַל-מְכוּנֶיהָ (cf. Ps 24:2; Job 38:4–6) typically has been understood to reflect a primitive cosmology, namely, "the world, like a floating saucer, is anchored 'upon the seas.'"⁹⁰ This would seem to be particularly apparent in Ps 24:2a, "He has founded it [the earth] upon the seas." However, this kind of thinking fails to take into consideration two factors. First, as Craigie observes, *Yam* and *Nahar* represented a *threat* to order in Canaanite mythology, and Baal's victory over them resulted in his kingship. The psalmist here, however, shows that Yahweh is the *creator* of the *ordered* world.⁹¹ This, in turn, is linked with Yahweh's kingship. It was Yahweh who was the creator. It was Yahweh who brought order out of chaos.

Second, the cosmology known to the psalmist would be that of the Genesis account. To go to Ugaritic or other ancient Near Eastern materials to derive the basis for the Hebrews' conception of the creation and existence of the world, and to ignore Israel's own literary sources is unwise. Hebrew cosmology includes a seven day creation by

⁸⁹Dahood, *Psalms III*, 35; Allen, *Psalms*, 26; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 879; and BHS, 1183.

⁹⁰Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, in the Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A. Hubbard, et al. (Waco: Word, 1983) 212. Cf. A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1955) 52; L. I. J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World: A Philological and Literary Study* (AnBib 39; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970) 126–30; and T. M. Ludwig, "The Traditions of Establishing the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah," *JBL* 92 (1973) 345–57.

⁹¹Craigie, *Psalms*, 212; cf. also Craigie, "Comparison," 10–21; and Anderson, *Psalms* 2, 720.

divine fiat, a flood destruction of that creation by an all powerful God, and a present providential maintenance of the post-flood world.

This becomes an essential factor in understanding any apparent link to Canaanite literature. First, one must acknowledge that there may well have been a common pool of imagery used by various peoples. Second, even if literary links can be demonstrated, Canaanite literature was not the basis or source for Hebrew thought. Rather, if it is cited, it is cited for polemical purposes to exalt Yahweh and his great acts above any other deity that might vie for the Hebrews' allegiance. The ethical monotheism of the Hebrew people was vastly different from the surrounding religions, and the thought of religious or cosmological dependence is extremely difficult to maintain.

Thus, while polemical aspects of this phrase may be granted, it is firmly rooted in the Hebrew traditions of a supernatural creation and the providential maintenance of the world. Since the foundations of the world were laid by divine fiat, the world was as permanent as the God that established it, namely, בְּלִי-תְמוּט עוֹלָם וָעֶד (Ps 104:5; cf. Ps 33:9).

The Earth Undergoes a Deluge of Water (vv 6-9). A major element in Hebrew cosmology was the Noahic flood described in Genesis 6-9. Since the psalm cannot be restricted to the scope of the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2, it is not surprising that a reference to such a catastrophic event would be found in this psalm. Hence, the psalmist proceeds to describe this event.

The waters cover the earth (v 6). The masculine pronoun on כֶּסֶתָּהּ probably refers to the feminine noun אֶרֶץ and may be explained either by the phenomenon of attraction (cf. 1 Sam 2:4), or by a reversion back to a basic masculine form as the discourse proceeds (cf. Exod 11:6; 2 Sam 17:13; Ezek 2:9).⁹² Allen suggests, however, that the הֵם may be an adaptation of an original הָאֲרֶץ regarded as an archaic הָאֶרֶץ. Thus, תְּהוֹם is the subject and the form should be rendered כֶּסֶתָּהּ. This results in vv 6a and 6b being synonymously parallel.⁹³ This latter view is speculative and problematic; in either case the sense is clear.

The term תְּהוֹם basically means a large body of water (cf. Pss 77:16; 107:26; Isa 51:10; 63:13; Ezek 26:19; Jonah 2:5). The attempt to link תְּהוֹם with Tiamat of the Enuma Elish story is well known,⁹⁴ but

⁹²Delitzsch, *Psalms III*, 130.

⁹³Allen, *Psalms*, 26.

⁹⁴Cf. D. W. Thomas, ed., *Documents from Old Testament Times* (New York: Nelson, 1958) 19; also H. G. May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim 'Many Waters,'" *JBL* 74 (1955) 9-21; and L. R. Fischer, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," *VT* 15 (1965) 313-24.

has been generally rejected. Linguistically, תְּהוֹם cannot be derived from Tiamat. The root merely refers to deep waters and this meaning was kept in Hebrew but divinized in animistic Akkadian thought and perhaps also in Ugaritic thought.⁹⁵ The psalmist is merely stating that the earth was covered by a deluge of water, so much so that the waters stood "עַל-הָרִים." This latter term reflects Gen 7:19–20, and any attempt to relate it to Genesis 1 in order to avoid the flood account must be considered rather arbitrary.

There is an interesting interchange of perfect and imperfect verbs in this verse as well as throughout the rest of the stanza. The account is initiated with the perfect verb כָּסִיתִי (completed action⁹⁶) and then followed by a series of imperfects (incomplete action⁹⁷) until v 9 where the perfect verb is re-introduced to terminate the discourse. That there is a literary intent behind this seems clear. The psalmist sets the scene in motion with waters covering the earth. He then heightens the drama by verbs of incomplete action (imperfects) denoting the waters as "standing," "fleeing," "hastening away," etc. He then concludes the unit with another perfect verb, making the statement that a boundary has been set, thus indicating the completed and final nature of this act. Thus, while the worshiper is aware of the historical setting of the psalm, he is also allowed to enter into the drama of Yahweh's activity on earth.

The waters flee from the surface of the earth (vv 7–8). An example of synonymous parallelism is observable in v 7 with both lines of the verse introduced by a causal מֵן,⁹⁸ and with גְּעָרְתָךְ parallel to קוֹל רַעְמָךְ and יְנוֹסֵן parallel to יַחְפֹּזֵן. The term גְּעָר simply indicates "a check applied . . . through strong admonitions or actions."⁹⁹ To read the word in the sense of "war cry"¹⁰⁰ is too narrow a meaning for what the parallelism or context of the verse entails. The construct phrase קוֹל רַעְמָךְ may well be taken as an adjectival phrase¹⁰¹ and probably is best rendered "thunderous voice."

A major exegetical problem occurs in v 8. The question concerns the subjects of יַעֲלֶה and יִרְדּוּ. Is the subject of both verbs מַיִם (v 6) so

⁹⁵R. Laird Harris, "תְּהוֹם," *TWOT* 2:965–66; also R. Laird Harris, "The Bible and Cosmology," *JETS* 5 (1963) 11–17; and W. White, "Tiamat," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* 5:744–45.

⁹⁶Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (2d ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1976) 29.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 30.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 55.

⁹⁹Harold Stigers, "גְּעָר," *TWOT* 2:170.

¹⁰⁰A. Caquot, "גְּעָר, ga'ar," *TDOT* 3:49; cf. also A. A. Macintosh, "A Consideration of the Hebrew גְּעָר," *VT* 19 (1969) 471–79.

¹⁰¹Cf. Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1971) 69.

that v 8 continues the discussion of the activities of the flood waters, or are the subjects הָרִים and בְּקָעוֹת, respectively so that v 8 creates an interlude or parenthesis describing the means by which the waters returned to their place?

Sutcliffe has argued for the former possibility. He says that the psalmist is describing the ordering of the world in terms of his own experience. Thus, when he thinks of places destined by God for the waters, he is also reminded of the fact that springs are found in the mountains. Thus, even though water naturally flows downwards, it nonetheless gushes out high in the mountain regions.¹⁰² Sutcliffe translates the verse, "They go up to the mountains, they go down to the valleys to the place thou hast established for them."¹⁰³ His major objection to seeing "mountains" and "valleys" as subjects is that the context is describing the activity of waters.¹⁰⁴

Clifford, although he also understands "waters" to be the subject, effectively answers Sutcliffe's particular objections. He notes that the context (vv 8b, 9) is speaking of *what* confines the cosmic waters, not the water supply of Palestine.¹⁰⁵ Allen further observes that the scenario presented in those verses, in light of OT thinking, must be understood to refer to the ocean (cf. Gen 1:9).¹⁰⁶ Thus, Allen, who takes הָרִים to be the subject of these verbs, concludes that the verse is a reference to the helterskelter movement of ocean waters as they leave the mountains (cf. v 7).¹⁰⁷

Dahood views the mountains as celestial mountains and the valleys as the nether chasms. He observes that הָרִים in v 6 refers to mountains on earth, but suggests that it may legitimately be taken as something different in v 8.¹⁰⁸ However, Dahood's whole scenario is based upon a mythical concept of a three-tiered universe which is illegitimate in light of Hebrew cosmology (see above). Additionally, Clifford has demonstrated that Dahood's transfer of scenes from earth to heaven is contextually improbable.¹⁰⁹

Grammatically, the verse can be taken either way. הָרִים and בְּקָעוֹת can be taken as accusatives of place after verbs of motion,¹¹⁰ or as subjects following their respective verbs.¹¹¹ Thus, the argument is reduced to one of context and interpretation.

¹⁰² Edmund F. Sutcliffe, "A Note on Psalm CIV 8," *VT* 2 (1952) 14.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Richard J. Clifford, "A Note on Psalm 104:5-9," *JBL* 100 (1981) 88.

¹⁰⁶ Allen, *Psalms*, 27.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Dahood, *Psalms III*, 36-37.

¹⁰⁹ Clifford, "A Note," 88.

¹¹⁰ GKC, 373, per Allen, *Psalms*, 27.

¹¹¹ GKC, 455. Terrien is incorrect when he states that יָרַד is a masculine verb; therefore, בְּקָעוֹת (feminine plural) must be its indirect object (S. Terrien, "Creation,

Fullarton takes the line as parenthetical.¹¹² He maintains that v 8a offers an explanatory note as to *how* the waters fled to their established places (vv 7, 8b). He is supported textually by the LXX, Vulgate, Peshitta, and, more recently, *RSV*, *NAB*, and *NASB*. Thus, such a rendering is a clear viable alternative.¹¹³

As Allen and Clifford have demonstrated, Sutcliffe's suggestions create more problems than they solve. However, Allen's alternative of flood waters moving over mountaintops and down into valleys depends upon necessary grammatical elements not present in the text (cf. "over" and "into" in the *NIV*) and upon imagery that violates the natural order of things (waters moving up and down mountains). Hence, it seems best to read the line in its normal verb-subject syntactical pattern and to recognize it as an explanatory parenthetical line. The antecedent of מִן הַמָּוֶה (v 8b) is then taken to be מִן הַמָּוֶה.

With this interpretation, the cataclysmic events of the Noahic deluge can be understood better. Massive tectonic activities characterized the latter part of the flood year with tremendous orogenic events. Mountain chains were thrust up and deep valleys and ocean basins were formed, the latter providing reservoirs for the massive amounts of water accumulated on the surface of the earth during the flood year. Whether this tremendous orogenic activity occurred *in situ* or as a result of the cataclysmic movement of continental plates¹¹⁴ is not elucidated in this text. However, the tectonic interpretation is completely consistent with the descriptions found in Genesis 6–9 (particularly Gen 7:11), and provides helpful information concerning this global catastrophe.¹¹⁵

The waters are established in their place (v 9). The psalmist now concludes the discussion of the Noahic deluge with a reference to the covenant with Noah described in Gen 8:20–22 and 9:11–17. That this psalmic statement cannot be a reference to Gen 1:9 (as Anderson maintains¹¹⁶) is evidenced by the fact that, according to Hebrew cos-

Cultus, and Faith in the Psalter," *Theological Education* 2 [1966] 116–28). The gender of a perfect 3 pl. verb is common.

¹¹²Fullarton, "Feeling for Form," 52, n. 8.

¹¹³Cf. also Ludwig, "Traditions of Establishing the Earth," 351.

¹¹⁴Such a suggestion has been made by Stuart Nevins, "Continental Drift, Plate Tectonics, and the Bible," *Acts and Facts*, Impact Series no. 32, 5 (February 1976) 3; cf. also David G. Barker, "Biblical Evidences for Continental Drift," *Bible Science Newsletter* 15:10 (October 1977) 2–3.

¹¹⁵To go into the arguments, evidences and mechanisms for a global flood is beyond the scope of this study. The reader is referred to two basic texts: John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962); and Joseph C. Dillow, *The Waters Above: Earth's Pre-Flood Vapor Canopy* (Chicago: Moody, 1981); as well as the voluminous literature on the subject particularly produced by the Institute for Creation Research.

¹¹⁶Anderson, *Psalms* 2, 720.

mology, the waters did return to cover the earth. The promise that such would never occur again was not given in Genesis 1 but in Genesis 9.

A significant parallel passage occurs in Isa 54:9 where a similar reference is made to waters not covering the earth again. It is notable that the first reference to this promise is in the clear context of the Noahic flood (Gen 8:21–22). Hence, even though the Noahic flood does not occupy a prominent place in the written record of the Hebrew Scriptures, it was a matter of general knowledge to the Hebrew people. The imagery of flood waters confined permanently within set boundaries is taken from the Genesis 6–9 context.¹¹⁷

It is instructive to observe that the psalmist emphasizes the permanence of the boundary grammatically in three ways. First, he returns to the perfect form of the verb. Second, גְּבוּל (גְּבוּל־שָׁמַיִת) is placed in emphatic position.¹¹⁸ Third, this verbal clause governs both parallel relative clauses introduced by כִּל and is an emphatic description of permanence. To view this as description of Gen 1:9 creates serious theological and historical difficulties.

Summary. The psalmist includes all of Hebrew cosmology in his psalm of praise to Yahweh, including the Noahic deluge. The first unit of the second stanza of the hymn is clearly marked by a change in verbal aspect and includes two parts: the setting of the unit (v 5) and a description of the destruction of the earth via a global flood (vv 6–9).

The text of major concern for this study (vv 6–9) is demonstrated to be (1) a description of the flood of earth subsequent to initial creation (vv 6–7, 8b), (2) a parenthetical note describing the tectonic mechanism that moved the waters to their present place (v 8a), and (3) a reference to the promise of Genesis 8 and 9 which assured the boundary of the global seas.

The Waters of the Earth Now Provide
for All of Yahweh's Creation (vv 10–13)

The psalmist now turns from the destructive role of the waters in Yahweh's providential care of the earth to their constructive role. Allen states that the psalmist now "proceeds to describe how water, the potential enemy of terrestrial life, has been harnessed to become

¹¹⁷Johns has argued that the Isaiah reference finds its strongest parallels with Job 38:4–30 and Prov 8:22–31 (Warren H. Johns, "The Rebuke of the Waters," *Ministry* [May 1983] 26). It is acknowledged that the imagery of Job 38:10–11 and Prov 8:29 point to Gen 1:9. However, a significant difference lies in that both speak of creative declarations governing the normative activity of the seas under Yahweh's providential hand, and not a decree preventing inundation of water in future earth history.

¹¹⁸GKC, 455; Williams, *Syntax*, 96.

its means of sustenance, serving God by serving its creatures.”¹¹⁹ This unit may be divided into three movements: first, the act of Yahweh in providing water for sustenance (v 10); second, a specific statement of grateful recipients of such provision (vv 11–12); and third, a general statement of the creation’s satisfaction with Yahweh’s care (v 13). The first and last movements are grammatically distinguished by the third masculine singular form of the verbs with their antecedent as Yahweh, in contrast to the central movement which commences with a third plural form of the verb with its antecedent being the “springs” of v 10.

CONCLUSION

In light of the purposes and parameters of this study, several conclusions may be drawn. First, this psalm is unique among ancient Near Eastern hymns in terms of its theology and cosmology. Any apparent links with other ancient Near Eastern literature are due to a common pool of imagery for describing a sovereign deity and the natural order of things and/or to a polemic against foreign deities that would vie for the Hebrews’ allegiance.

Second, a structural analysis of the psalm demonstrates that the scope of the psalm reaches far beyond the creation week of Genesis 1. It includes the totality of Yahweh’s relationship to his world, both as creator and sustainer.

Third, in light of the broader cosmological perspective of the psalm and the similar citation in Isa 54:9, vv 6–9 clearly point to the Noachic deluge of Genesis 6–9 rather than the creation account of Genesis 1. To relegate these verses to the creation account creates serious theological and historical problems, especially in light of the emphatic statements regarding the finality of the determination of the oceanic boundaries. Recognizing that Ps 104:6–9 refers to the Noachic flood provides an acceptable alternative to the more traditional interpretations.

Finally, in spite of the apparent contextual incongruity, v 8a is best taken as a parenthetical line descriptive of the mechanism of the retreat and settling of the waters behind their final boundaries. It was the mountains that went up and the valleys that went down. This provides valuable insight into the catastrophic tectonic activities of the flood year.

¹¹⁹Allen, *Psalms*, 33.

THE SINGLE INTENT OF SCRIPTURE— CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A THEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT

RAJU D. KUNJUMMEN

Evangelicals currently debate whether the Bible always has a "single intent" or if there is sometimes a "fuller meaning" (sensus plenior) due to divine inspiration. The literary theory of E. D. Hirsch indicates that meaning is to be associated with authorial intent. Examination of key passages of Scripture indicates that the authorial intent of the divine author sometimes contains implications that extend beyond those intended by the human author.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

THE issue of hermeneutical theory in relation to biblical interpretation is prominent today. By all indications, hermeneutics will continue to be in the forefront of evangelical concerns. Therefore, there is an ongoing need to examine the validity of various theories in this discipline.

Hermeneutics is not a discipline isolated from theology, though it may be true that biblical and exegetical theology has relied to some extent on a hermeneutical theory derived from the humanism of the Renaissance. It has been pointed out that the "problem of hermeneutics is always subordinate to the problem of revelation, for one's view of the Bible will determine his interpretation."¹ It is imperative that interpretive theory be tested by Scripture. The present study proposes to examine the hermeneutical principle of a "single intent of Scripture."

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., the foremost proponent of this principle in contemporary evangelicalism, has affirmed the following:

¹Don H. McGaughey, "The Problem of Biblical Hermeneutics," *Restoration Quarterly* 5 (1961) 236-47. The quotation was taken from its abstract in *Religious and Theological Abstracts* 7 (1964) 325.

God's meaning and revelatory-intention in any passage of Scripture may be accurately and confidently ascertained only by studying the verbal meanings of the divinely delegated and inspired human writers.²

No definition of interpretation could be more fundamental than this: *To interpret we must in every case reproduce the sense the Scriptural writer intended for his own words.* The first step in the interpretive process is to link only those ideas with the author's language that he connected with them.³

Only the doctrine and the theology prior to the time of the writer's composition of his revelation (which theology we propose to call here the "Analogy of Scripture") may be legitimately used in the task of theological exegesis, in other words, where the writer directly cites or obviously alludes to the theology that preceded his writing and formed a backdrop against which he cast his own message. Only the discipline of biblical theology, if it traces the buildup of doctrine from era to era within each of the Testaments, will supply the extremely important theological data necessary to rescue an otherwise dull philological and grammatical exercise. The "analogy of Scripture" then was the "pre-understanding" of both the writer and of those in his audience who were alert to what God had revealed prior to this new word or revelation.⁴

Kaiser also cites the question raised by Bruce Vawter concerning *sensus plenior*:

If this . . . deeper meaning was reserved by God to Himself and did not enter into the writer's purview at all, do we not postulate a Biblical word effected outside the control of the human author's will and judgment . . . and therefore not produced through a truly *human* instrumentality?⁵

Both Vawter and Kaiser would answer this question in the affirmative and then deny its validity. Elsewhere, Kaiser makes the following affirmation:

What is it that the whole or unity of Scripture teaches that cannot be found in the individual parts by grammar and syntax? And if we must

²Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Single Intent of Scripture," in *Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith*, ed. Kenneth Kantzer (Nashville: Nelson, 1978) 138.

³Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Legitimate Hermeneutics," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979) 118.

⁴Kaiser, "Single Intent," 140.

⁵Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) 115; Walter C. Kaiser, "The Current Crisis in Exegesis and the Apostolic Use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9:8-10," *JETS* 21 (March 1978) 8. Vawter had stated his view elsewhere without the question. See Bruce Vawter, "The Fuller Sense: Some Considerations," *CBQ* 26 (1964) 115.

answer that a *different sense* is taught which went beyond the consciousness of the original instrumental agent who wrote that text, then we must argue that such is not an objective *sensus plenior*. In fact, we must deny that such a different sense is Scriptural (i.e., *graphē*, "written") at all.⁶

Thus, it can be seen that the concepts associated with "Single Intent" defy the apparent simplicity of the term. The issue at hand, therefore, is evident. What is the nature of divine revelation? Can divine and human authorship in the case of Scripture be distinguished? Should they be distinguished? Does such a distinction deny what authorial function Scripture does affirm to be present on the part of the human author of Scripture? Can we discern, at least in specific instances in Scripture, a distinction between divine and human authorial intentions? The following investigation is directed toward answering these questions. It does not delineate an exegetical methodology which spells out the details of how to approach the interpretation of a given text. The present concern is primarily a doctrinal one—the nature of special revelation.

It is necessary to discuss what is meant by intention before one can meaningfully treat the subject of "authorial intent." Wimsatt and Beardsley, speaking on the subject of poetry, have defined intention as "design or plan in the author's mind."⁷ Elliott Johnson, after discussing what intention does not mean, affirms that it is "to be identified with the 'sense of the whole' by which the author arranges and relates each particular meaning of his composition."⁸ Geisler discusses the various meanings of "intention" and concludes that "the proper meaning of the *intention* of the author is the *expressed meaning* in the text."⁹ It seems necessary for the present writer in light of the use of the term to define "authorial intention" pertaining to a written document as *the purpose of the author which governs the meaning of the text, to be discerned from the text and relevant context*.¹⁰ The

⁶Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "A Response to 'Author's Intention and Biblical Interpretation,'" in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Academic Books, 1984) 444f. See also similar statements in Kaiser's critique of John Goldingay's *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1981) in *JETS* 26 (1983) 485.

⁷W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," in *The Verbal Icon* by W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. (N.p.: The Noonday Press, 1960) 4. See also Elliott Johnson, "Author's Intention and Biblical Interpretation," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, 413.

⁸*Ibid.*, 412–17.

⁹Norman L. Geisler, "The Relation of Purpose and Meaning in Interpreting Scripture," *GTJ* 5 (1984) 231. See also his "A Response to 'Truth: Relationship of Theories of Truth to Hermeneutics,'" in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, 54.

¹⁰There is a limitation in determining the author's intention in an ancient text because where questions exist, direct clarification is not possible. One must also speak

matter of authorial intention pertaining to Scripture will be considered by giving attention to the following: (1) the hermeneutic theory of E. D. Hirsch, Jr.; (2) the dynamics of revelation; and (3) indicators of biblical hermeneutics derived from the results of grammatico-historical exegesis.

EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE AND THE HERMENEUTIC THEORY OF
E. D. HIRSCH, JR.

Some Salient Aspects of Hirsch's Theory

Meaning and Significance

E. D. Hirsch has figured prominently in recent discussions on hermeneutics, as a survey of the literature will show.¹¹ Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation* affirmed the rightful place of authorial intention in the determination of meaning. His hermeneutic theory has hinged on the distinction between "meaning" and "significance."¹² "Meaning is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent. Significance, on the other hand, names a relationship between that meaning and a person, or a conception or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable."¹³ Furthermore, the former is the

of the "relevant context" because this may vary for different texts. The writer has in mind such things as literary and theological contexts, *Sitz im Leben*, etc. Also, note the following statements of G. E. M. Anscombe (*Intention*, [2d ed.; Ithaca: Cornell University, 1976] 7-9): "How do we tell someone's intentions? . . . If you want to say at least some true things about a man's intentions, you have a strong chance of success if you mention what he actually did or is doing. For whatever else he may intend, or whatever may be his intentions in doing what he does, the greater number of the things which you would say straight off a man did or was doing, will be things he intends. . . . In most cases what you will say is that [*sic*] the man himself knows; and again in most, though indeed in fewer, cases you will be reporting not merely what he is doing, but *an* intention of his—namely, to do that thing. What is more, if it is not an intention of his, this will for the most part be clear without asking him."

¹¹I would mention here only the extensive interaction with Hirsch's theory in P. D. Juhl, *Interpretation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1980) 16-44. Cf. Johnson, "Author's Intention," 411f.

¹²E. D. Hirsch, *Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976) 1ff.

¹³E. D. Hirsch, *Validity of Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale, 1967) 8. Hirsch writes, "Significance would be any meaning which has a relation to the verbal meaning so defined—no matter how neutral, descriptive, or tame the related meaning might be. . . . Significance is always 'meaning-to' never 'meaning-in.' Significance always entails a relationship between what is in a man's verbal meaning and what is outside it" (pp. 62-63). This statement of Hirsch should not be construed to mean that significance can be "anything imaginable." Significance names the *relationship between* meaning and anything extraneous to the author's meaning that can be imagined.

object of interpretation. The latter falls within the domain of (literary) criticism.

Meaning and Implication

Hirsch also sought to distinguish the implications of a text from its meaning and its significance. Implications are part of the meaning of the text.¹⁴ "The crucial problem in the theory and practice of interpretation is to distinguish between possible implications that do belong to the meaning of a text and those that do not belong."¹⁵ Even though implications and meaning may be viewed in terms of sub-meanings and the whole respectively, Hirsch points out that "A merely spatial conception of the part-whole relationship is inadequate. The peculiarity of a whole meaning is that it retains its integrity and completeness even if all its implications have not been articulated."¹⁶ The above distinctions are useful for biblical hermeneutics.

Hirsch emphasizes that prior knowledge is essential in the elucidation of implications. Thus, to use Hirsch's illustration of a right triangle,¹⁷ an author can imply (whether consciously or unconsciously) the relationship between the lengths of the sides of the triangle as stated in the Pythagorean theorem only if he first knew the theorem. A reader/interpreter can discern the implication of such a relationship only if he also knows the theorem.

Meaning and Intrinsic Genre

Another Hirschian¹⁸ concept from which evangelical interpreters can benefit is the idea of *intrinsic genre*. He defines this as "that sense

¹⁴As Hirsch (*Validity*, 61–62) states, "To say that a particular meaning is implied by an utterance is *not* to insist that it is always 'unsaid' or 'secondary,' but only that it is a component within a larger whole. The distinction is between a submeaning of an utterance and the whole array of submeanings that it carries. This array, along with the principles for generating it, I call the 'meaning' of the utterance, and any submeaning belonging to the array I call an implication." Hirsch (*ibid.*, 63–64) also distinguishes *significance* from *implication* in that significance is "meaning-to" (someone or something) and therefore limitless. Implications are not limitless; "implications lie within the meaning as a whole and are circumscribed by some kind of boundary, which delimits that meaning."

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 64. Furthermore, when meaning is viewed as a willed type which is shared, "an implication belongs to a meaning as a trait belongs to a type" (p. 66).

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁸By "Hirschian" here and elsewhere in this paper I only mean to acknowledge direct dependence upon his work for the definitions of the particular terms and elucidation of the underlying concepts. Evidently, meanings, implications, significances and genres have existed as long as communication itself.

of the whole by means of which an interpreter can correctly understand any part in its determinacy."¹⁹ When one reads a text he first approaches it with a certain expectation of its content (meaning). As the reading (or hearing) progresses, "this conception of the meaning of the whole" may be revised, corrected, re-adjusted, or changed. This "overarching notion" of the sense of the whole text or communication which controls the conception of the whole by "embracing a system of expectations" is the genre.²⁰

An interpreter's preliminary generic conception of a text is constitutive of everything that he subsequently understands, and this remains the case unless and until that generic conception is altered.²¹

All understanding of meaning is necessarily genre-bound.²²

This description of the genre-bound character of understanding is, of course, a version of the hermeneutic circle, which in its classical formulation has been described as the interdependence of part and whole: the whole can be understood only through its parts, but the parts can be understood only through the whole.²³

Intrinsic genre as defined by Hirsch is both heuristic and constitutive.²⁴ The interpreter discerns intrinsic genre intuitively and on the basis of increased understanding. However, it is a genuine characteristic of the text. The intrinsic genre of a text is subsumed under what is generally considered "context," i.e., "the *givens that accompany* constructions that are part of a text's meaning."²⁵

¹⁹Ibid., 86. Thus, Hirsch's "intrinsic genre" should not be strictly identified with the notion of "literary genre."

²⁰Ibid., 78.

²¹Ibid., 74. This statement is elaborated fully in the following remarks: "If the generic idea of the meaning as a whole could not be defeated and baffled by the experience of subsequent details, then we would never recognize that we had misunderstood. On the other hand, it is essential to notice that in most cases our expectations are not baffled and defeated. We found the types of meanings we expected to find, because what we found was in fact powerfully influenced by what we expected. All along the way we construe *this* meaning instead of *that* because *this* meaning belongs to the type of meaning we are interpreting while *that* does not. If we happen to encounter something which can only be construed as *that*, then we have to start all over and postulate another type of meaning altogether in which *that* will be at home. However, in the very act of revising our generic conception we will have started all over again, and ultimately everything we understand will have been constituted and partly determined by the new generic conception" (pp. 71ff.)

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid. Hirsch does not prefer the traditional formulation of the hermeneutic circle. He would define it in terms of "genre" and "trait" (p. 77).

²⁴Ibid., 78.

²⁵Ibid., 87. Note the discussion on "context" on p. 86ff.

The Application of Hirschian Concepts for Biblical Hermeneutics
 Meaning and Significance²⁶

In discussing the usefulness of Hirsch's theory for biblical exegesis, it must be noted that he was not writing to provide an interpretive theory for divine revelation. The importance of this should not be underestimated. Hirsch's primary purpose was to counteract existential approaches to literary interpretation. The present writer agrees with Hirsch's definition of meaning as that which the author intended. But ordinary literature does not have associated with it the miraculous phenomenon of simultaneous authorship by an omniscient God.

Some evangelicals have employed the distinction between significance and meaning in order to argue that the divine author's meaning cannot be distinguished from that of the human author. An important discussion has centered around John 11:49–52.²⁷ Many who believe that the divine and human authorial intentions behind the text of Scripture can be distinguished invoke this example in support of their perspective. This distinction of authorial intentions is disallowed by Kaiser who seeks to resolve the apparent problem by an appeal to the meaning-significance distinction. John 11:49–52 reads as follows (*NASB*):

But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people and the whole nation not perish."

Now this he did not say of his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that He might gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

²⁶Kaiser, who has often utilized the Hirschian distinction between meaning and significance, rightly recognizes that the latter's view of "meaning" as elucidated in *Aims of Interpretation* is in part unacceptable to those who insist that *valid* meaning is the meaning of the author. Cf. Kaiser, "The Current Crisis in Exegesis," 3–4; and "Legitimate Hermeneutics," 457, n. 10. Hirsch (*Aims*, 20) argues that intuitionism is legitimate interpretation. He (incorrectly) justifies the basis of such a practice by saying, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (*ibid.*). The following statements should reveal Hirsch's view: "In some respects, intuitionism almost certainly is correct. . . . The intuitionist . . . is right to see that the same linguistic form can sponsor different meanings" (p. 21); "Self-evidently, a text can mean anything it has been understood to mean" (p. 77); and "The normative dimension of interpretation is always in the last analysis an ethical dimension" (*ibid.*).

²⁷The discussion of this passage in this connection is more than just recent. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, qn. 173, art. 4.

Kaiser deals with the problem in the following manner: "The truth-intention of Caiaphas (v. 50)" constitutes the meaning. The apostle John found a "*significance*" in the words of Caiaphas and this is stated in v 51. Furthermore, John "*corrected* Caiaphas's provincial statement with its ethnocentricities and turned it into a comprehensive statement of the universal implication of Jesus' death (v. 52)." Kaiser's explanation of the dynamics oversimplifies the whole matter. According to him, the point of v 51 is not the "*method* in which Caiaphas spoke (unconscious or involuntary prediction), but that since he was in the office of high priest when he gave this somewhat bitter proverb, it had the *significance* of an official prediction." Furthermore, "John is not giving us the contents of Caiaphas's prophecy, but only . . . the significance of his otherwise witty speech." Kaiser concludes then, concerning the utterance of Caiaphas, that "when an official like himself . . . gave a verdict that could take on a proverbial status and significance which accorded with the plan of God, only the God of providence could be praised, for now the wrath of men had been turned into the glory of God."²⁸

Two conclusions can be deduced from Kaiser's statements. First, Caiaphas was *not* speaking or functioning as a prophet. He made a "witty" statement which because of providence took on a different sense. Second, John is not giving the *meaning* of the words of Caiaphas, but only the *significance*. It will be argued shortly that different *meanings*, not merely the difference between meaning and significance, are involved. These conclusions seem to be inconsistent and are not based on the verbal meaning of John's statements.

In the first place, it can be argued that Kaiser does not apply the meaning-significance distinction properly. When Caiaphas said "it is better for you that one man should die for the people than that the whole nation perish" (*NIV*), he had in mind averting Roman military action so that the rulers along with the people could continue to retain their position and national privilege. The idea of "perishing" intended by Caiaphas was the destruction of temporal things. "One man dying for the people" meant one man, namely Jesus, being put to death by the Romans so that the Jewish nation with its people would not incur the wrath of the imperial power. Any *significances* one finds in Caiaphas's statement must come from this meaning. If a significance does not properly derive from the actual meaning of a statement, it is not a valid significance.²⁹

The need for validity in significance (a matter not dealt with at any length by Hirsch) is just as crucial as the need for validity in

²⁸Kaiser, "The Single Intent," 128-31.

²⁹See Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, p. 32 where he says, "note well, it [i.e., significance] must be linked [to meaning]."

interpretation. This matter is at the heart of all attempts to make application of Scripture dependent on and deriving from its meaning (the product of exegesis). The point can be illustrated. Many, perhaps even Hirsch,³⁰ misconstrue the meaning of 2 Cor 3:6 ("The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life") to mean that the words of Scripture have to be interpreted "spiritually" (i.e., non-literally) in order to have impact upon lives. Based upon this misinterpretation of the meaning of 2 Cor 3:6, they make this application: "Scripture must be spiritualized to communicate God's message to others." But this cannot be admitted as a proper interpretation of 2 Cor 3:6. A significance cannot be valid when it is not based on valid meaning.

The point of the matter is that if the apostle John is suggesting a "significance" of the statement of Caiaphas, he has suggested an invalid significance because it is not supported by the meaning of v 50. He retained the words, but changed their meaning. To treat the problem this way is to imply that inspiration canonizes false significances while the meaning of the human author is unchangeable.

A second, and more serious, aspect of Kaiser's explanation of this problem is his interpretation of v 51.³¹ He takes ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ as meaning "of his own authority." It is not clear that John's statement in v 51 can be construed to mean that Caiaphas's "bitter proverb" had "the *significance* of an official prediction" because of the office of Caiaphas. The preposition ἀπό followed by a reflexive pronoun occurs thirteen times in John's gospel and once elsewhere in the NT (2 Cor 3:5). The phrases are found in the gospel modifying λαλεῖν/λέγειν (7:17, 18; 11:51; 14:10; 16:13; 18:34), ποιεῖν (5:19, 30; 8:28), ἔρχεσθαι (8:42), τιθέναι (10:18) and καρπὸν φέρειν (15:4), and in 2 Cor 3:5, ἰκανὸς εἶναι. It is not possible to convey the idea behind all these usages with one English phrase. In general the phrase designates *source*, whether of message (John 7:17; 14:10; 16:13), action (5:19; 8:28—note also the lack of distinction between "speaking" and "doing" in 14:10), commission (8:42), power for fruit-bearing (15:4), or sufficiency for the Christian ministry (2 Cor 3:5). In John 10:18, the phrase seems to refer to Christ's *will*. He lays down His life of His own initiative. The case is similar in 18:34—was Pilate repeating the words of someone else or was the question his own? It appears that the way in which *NASB* renders the phrase in John 11:51 is quite appropriate: "Now this he did not say on his own initiative."

The words of Caiaphas did not ultimately come from himself. John's authoritative explanation of the dynamics behind Caiaphas's utterance is found in v 51. He was not speaking *from himself*—he

³⁰Hirsch, *Aims*, 20.

³¹Kaiser, "The Single Intent," 130–31.

was *prophesying*.³² John is using irony here but he is not sarcastic about the fact of Caiaphas prophesying. To explain that Caiaphas's prophecy (ἐπροφήτευσαν) merely assumed "the significance of an official prediction" is not proper,³³ especially in light of the explanation, "he did not say this of himself/of his own initiative."

There is another aspect of this problem that needs to be dealt with. It pertains to John's "correcting" the "ethnocentricities" of Caiaphas's statement and giving it universal scope. It would appear that if Caiaphas was really prophesying (speaking forth a word from God), the apostle is giving the true meaning (i.e., theological meaning intended by God) of the statement in his explanation. "One man dying" refers to substitution, and "the people" indicates all the people of God, including "those who were scattered abroad." It is just as cogent to argue that John is giving the "meaning" as it is to say that he is "correcting" or "adding," for there is little contextual evidence to support the latter contention.

The crux of the problem in this passage may now be analyzed. God spoke through the high priest a prophetic word concerning Christ. The high priest was a wicked man and intended evil by his words. But God had a different intention through that prophecy so that John was able to discern the message of a substitutionary atonement. It is not simply a matter of distinguishing meaning from significance that is involved here. It is, rather, a matter of multiple (two) meanings. We may say that the statement was a pun. But Caiaphas did not intend it as a pun—only God did. The revelatory dynamic involved in this passage is admittedly rather unique. But the previous discussion shows that the Hirschian distinction between meaning and significance is not properly used by Kaiser. Distinct meanings should be treated as distinct *meanings*. Furthermore, attention must be given to the matter of validity of significance.

If this argument against Kaiser's analysis is correct, does it have relevance for the nature of prophetic revelation and the single intent? I believe it does. In the first place, it calls into question the *a priori* assumption of constant confluence between human and divine meaning intentions. Second, it opens the possibility that God may through a later author explain more of what he had in mind in an earlier statement in a manner similar to how he clarified through John his intention through Caiaphas's prophecy. This is not an outlandish thought despite the limited analogy between Caiaphas and the OT prophets.

³²For other Johannine usages besides John 11:51, see Rev 10:11, 11:3.

³³BAGD (723) gives the following meanings for προφητεύω: a. proclaim a divine revelation; b. prophetically reveal what is hidden; c. foretell the future, prophesy.

Meaning and Implication

In the case of the Scriptures, the problem of implications is a crucial one. There is need to identify the place of divine knowledge and that of man as they apply to the unravelling of implications contained in the text.

A valuable discussion of implication in biblical interpretation as it applies to authorial intention is that of Johnson.³⁴ Using Gottlob Frege's terms, he speaks of "sense" and "reference." "Reference concerns implications of meaning which are apparent when the sense is related to the historical instance."³⁵ The fulfillment of Zech 12:10 stated in John 19:37 illustrates this.

In Zechariah 12:10, even if the sense *pierced through* is established, the reference is still not clear. . . . Only when the sense is compared to Roman crucifixion is the reference clear. Yet the death by crucifixion is an implication of the prophet's meaning (John 19:37).³⁶

Johnson illustrates the phenomenon further by using Psalm 16 as an example. Its messianic import is clearly indicated in the NT (Acts 2:22–32; 13:34–47). Johnson proposes that "God and David shared a defining sense in the expression of the Psalm."³⁷ Whereas God "was conscious of all the implications of reference to David and Christ," "David may have been limited in his conscious reference."³⁸ Kaiser responds negatively to such a view. According to him, to say that "the human author did not share fully in the divine author's meanings"³⁹ is a "bifurcation between the human and the divine author in the act of revelation" and "introduces a revelation which is above or below revelation and, hence, an act of confusion."⁴⁰ In an earlier

³⁴ Johnson, "Author's Intention," 416ff.

³⁵ Ibid., 10. Frege's concept of sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*) has been illustrated with the example of "the evening star" and "the morning star." They have two distinct "senses" but refer to the same thing—the planet Venus. This "example . . . has been endlessly repeated" (Michael Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* [New York: Harper and Row, 1973] 97). For discussions of "sense" and "reference," see *ibid.*, 89–97, 160; E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity*, 211ff.; John S. Feinberg, "Truth: Relationship of Theories of Truth to Hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, 28–30.

³⁶ Johnson, "Author's Intention," 417.

³⁷ Ibid. The defining sense of the text is the "type of meaning" (p. 420). For the psalm used as example, the type of meaning which Johnson sees is: "Rejoicing in God, His portion brings His Holy One hope for resurrection" (*ibid.*).

³⁸ Ibid., 417.

³⁹ So argued by Johnson, *ibid.*, 423–28.

⁴⁰ Kaiser, in the Abstract that prefaces "A Response to Author's Intention," paper read at Summit II of the ICBI. Abstracts of papers do not appear in the printed edition *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*.

publication Kaiser had adopted a different view concerning the use of Psalm 16 in the NT and its messianic implications.⁴¹

Johnson points out that implications, since they are part of meaning, are legitimate objects of interpretation.⁴² He also has pointed out that the human instrument in the process of revelation of Scripture was not necessarily cognizant of all the implications of the divine word.⁴³ Nevertheless, God knew them all.

The relationship of implication to meaning and interpretation can be shown from another example which does not employ messianic associations to demonstrate the point. In response to the Sadducean trick question concerning the resurrection (Matt 22:22-33 and parallel passages), Christ cited Exod 3:6 and argued that אלהי אברהם . . . אנכי implied the resurrection. Obviously, there is no plain statement of the resurrection of saints in this declaration. However, it is possible to derive the implication of resurrection from this Scripture in the following manner.⁴⁴

1. "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" implies covenant relationship stemming from God's promise to the patriarchs (Gen 15:1; 17:7, 8; 28:13). The promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:7-21; 17:1-16) was confirmed to Isaac (Gen 17:21; 26:3-5) and to Jacob after him (Gen 28:13-15; 35:9-12).
2. The promise granted that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well as their "seed" would inherit the land of Canaan.
3. The patriarchs did not really obtain the promise made to them. The land promised to them never really became theirs (Heb 11:13). Jacob died in Egypt.
4. The fact that God is called their God implies his faithfulness to them to make good what he promised.

⁴¹Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Promise to David in Psalm 16 and Its Application in Acts 2:25-33 and 13:32-37," *JETS* 23 (1980) 219-29.

⁴²Johnson ("Author's Intention," 421) says, "The interpreter exegetes the implications of the author's chosen type of meaning." Cf. Hirsch, *Validity*, 57.

⁴³To Johnson's example of Zech 12:10 and John 19:37, can be added (1) Isa 53:12 with Luke 22:37, (2) Zech 13:7 with Matt 26:31, (3) Hos 11:1 with Matt 2:15, (4) Jer 31:15 with Matt 2:18, (5) Ps 41:9 with John 13:18, (6) Exod 12:46; Num 9:12; and Ps 34:20 with John 19:36, (7) Ps 69:25 with Acts 1:20a, (8) Ps 109:8 with Acts 1:20b, etc.

⁴⁴Such a derivation of implication is not identical to the "Consequent Sense" of Roman Catholic hermeneutics which brings in a premise derived from "reason" into the syllogism; cf. Walter Kaiser, "Response," 443ff.; C. F. DeVine, "The Consequent Sense," *CBQ* 2 (1940) 151-52.

5. The patriarchs cannot enter into their promise if they are dead, and therefore Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must rise from the dead (cp. John 8:56).

It cannot be said that Exodus 3:6 *means* that the dead will rise again. But that is part of the implication of the meaning. Even if this implication had not been identified, the sense of the statement would have been complete. When in Exodus God spoke to Moses and when Moses wrote down the event, it is likely that the idea of resurrection from the dead would not have been associated by him with the text. Yet, Christ chastised the Sadducees for not *understanding* the Scriptures. Man is responsible to deduce, in dependence upon God the author (Ps 119:18) and in the light of biblical theology, the implications of biblical statements.

Intrinsic Genre, the Analogy of Scripture and Authorial Intention

The concept of *intrinsic genre* has not figured prominently in the discussion under review. However, this writer finds it a very useful concept with application to biblical hermeneutics. Johnson has very appropriately given attention to "the conception of the whole" in connection with authorial intention.⁴⁵

The application of genre logic to the Bible as a whole is made possible by the fact that the Scriptures as a whole are a unity. Even though the different human instruments in the process of inscripturation have left the imprint of their individual personalities, styles, vocabularies, and circumstances on the written word, "the doctrine of inspiration . . . tells us that the Scriptures are the products of a single divine mind."⁴⁶ Ultimately, the Bible is one book with one author for the whole.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Johnson, "Author's Intention," 419.

⁴⁶J. I. Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 350.

⁴⁷Cf. 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:1; 2 Pet 1:21; Acts 3:21. See also Ps 119:89. Wayne A. Grudem ("Scripture's Self-Attestation," in *Scripture and Truth*, 33) writes on this: "God's word stands firm forever in the heavens, the place of God's abode. This implies that according to the psalmist God's written words are actually a copy of words that God in heaven has permanently decided on and has subsequently caused to be committed to writing by men." Briggs (*Psalms*, ICC, 2:429) writes of this verse, "The divine Law was everlasting, pre-existent in heaven before it came down to earth as the latter rabbins understood it . . . immutable for all future time in generation after generation of mankind." W. E. Vine (*Divine Inspiration of the Bible* [Brandon, Manitoba: Ritchie's Christian Book Service, 1969] 55-56) makes a similar observation based on Jas 2:23: "In showing that works are the essential counterpart of faith in the matter of justification, he [i.e., James] illustrates his point by relating how Abraham offered up Isaac

If it is granted that the Bible is one book with one author having an underlying unity of purpose and intention, then one may justifiably speak of the intrinsic genre of Scripture as a whole. The interpreter arrives at a perception of this genre heuristically. In other words, the interpreter of Scripture must go through the unidirectional hermeneutical spiral of preunderstanding→hermeneutics→exegesis→theology. Through a process similar to successive approximation in mathematics, the interpreter arrives at a closer approximation of truth, and a better hermeneutic.⁴⁸

Thus, the reader of Scripture who might have an uncertain concept of the serpent in Genesis 3, after reading through the entirety of Scripture including the book of Revelation, will have a revised (and more exact) conception of the whole so that his sense of the identity of the serpent is more complete and exact. The providential workings of God in the lives of biblical characters (e.g., Abraham's servant, Ruth, and Esther) assume greater overall importance when re-evaluated in the light of further revelation and a greater awareness of the purpose of God through history. Inasmuch as Isaac's bride, David and his ancestors, and the nation in exile all directly relate to the promised seed, later "chapters" in God's book unfold more fully the implications of the content of the earlier ones. Such implications may not have been perceived by the human authors because of their chronological limitations.⁴⁹

The unity of Scripture which derives from its divine authorship is actual and real and should play a part in exegesis just as the unity of individual books does. While revelation was progressive since God's self-disclosure was piecemeal and spread out over time (Heb 1:1), the supernatural character of Scripture validates the application of the analogy of (not necessarily antecedent) Scripture.⁵⁰

upon the altar. In this act he says that the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.' When Abraham offered Isaac, the Scripture in Gen 15, recording the fact of his faith . . . had not been written. . . . The Scripture apparently was regarded by James as an ever-present thing in the mind of God, foreknown and fore-ordained in the Divine design, and therefore certain of being recorded in course of time." These explanations of the "latter rabbins" as well as Vine may be rather tenuous.

⁴⁸See J. I. Packer, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics and Inerrancy," in *Jerusalem and Athens*, ed. E. R. Geehan (N.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971) 146-47; and J. I. Packer, "Hermeneutics and Biblical Authority," *Themelios* 1 (1975) 3-12.

⁴⁹On the relation between intrinsic genre and implication Hirsch (*Validity*, 89-91) writes: "The correct determination of implication is a crucial element in the task of discriminating a valid from an invalid interpretation. . . . The implications of an utterance are determined by its intrinsic genre. . . . The logic of implication is always . . . a genre logic, as common sense tells every interpreter. Whether an implication is present depends upon the kind of meaning that is being interpreted."

⁵⁰J. I. Packer ("Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics and Inerrancy," 148) says, "Scripture should be interpreted by Scripture, just as one part of a human teacher's

A generic conception of the meaning of Scripture as a whole will affect one's understanding of authorial intention. God alone is the single author of the whole. Even though they were aware of prior revelation, the human authors had an active role only in writing the parts. Bruce Vawter says it well when he states: "The message that God intended to be conveyed by human words at a given point in time, may indeed take on added dimension as it is seen within a larger context than that afforded by the initial utterance."⁵¹

Thus, divine implications of meaning will exceed that of the human author on matters which are unfolded in greater detail in the progress of revelation. As Kaiser has stated so aptly, "No meaning of a text is complete until the interpreter has heard the *total single* intention of the author."⁵² Kaiser had in mind the human author "who stood in the presence of God," but the statement has no less validity when one has in mind God himself, the author of the whole.

message may and should be interpreted by appeal to the rest. *Scriptura scripturae interpres!* This does not, of course, imply that the meaning of all texts can be ascertained simply by comparing them with other texts, without regard for their own literary, cultural, and historical background, or for our extra-biblical knowledge bearing on the matter with which they deal." D. A. Carson ("Unity and Diversity in the New Testament," in *Scripture and Truth*, 91), citing Packer ("Preaching as Biblical Interpretation," in *Inerrancy and Common Sense*, ed. Roger R. Nicole and J. Ramsey Michaels [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980] 198) says, "There is . . . a sense in which every New Testament writer communicates to Christians today more than he knew he was communicating, simply because Christians can now read his work as part of the completed New Testament canon." This is not an appeal to *sensus plenior*, at least not in any traditional sense. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that with greater numbers of pieces of the jigsaw puzzle provided, the individual pieces and clusters of pieces are seen in new relationships not visible before." Kaiser (*Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 90, 134ff.) advocates the analogy of *antecedent* Scripture which limits the parts of the canon available for the "analogy" to those which historically preceded the text under study. While such a cautious approach has obvious usefulness for preventing eisegesis, its validity as a strict rule for biblical interpretation has to be denied. The reasons for that are enunciated elsewhere in this paper. The questionableness of this principle can be demonstrated from the author's own practice. In his *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 36, Kaiser discusses the language and grammar of Gen 3:15 with reference to the "seed" and the use of the pronoun הוּא to refer to זרע in the biblical text. The question is asked by interpreters, "Are the 'seed' and 'he' collective, or is it singular?" "The question," contends Kaiser, "is misdirected, especially if the divine intention deliberately wished to designate the collective notion which included a personal unity in a single person who was to obtain victory for the whole group he represented." Despite the disclaimer that follows about any "retrojection from a NT *peshet* or midrash" one must wonder why the author would think along the lines of a "collective notion" which had included in it "a personal unity in a single person" with the added idea of "representation," unless, of course, his understanding of later revelation has unfolded to him implicit meanings of the earlier one. See also Kaiser, "Legitimate Hermeneutics," 136.

⁵¹Vawter, "The Fuller Sense," 127.

⁵²Kaiser, "Legitimate Hermeneutics," 127.

THE DUAL AUTHORSHIP OF SCRIPTURE AND AUTHORIAL INTENTION(S)

The Dynamics of Revelation
(Or, *The Psychology of Inspiration*)

Whereas conservative evangelicals have staunchly upheld the inerrancy, authority and the divine-human authorship of the Scriptures, inadequate thought and consideration have been directed toward the psychology of inspiration.⁵³ The dynamics of revelation can at one extreme be viewed in terms of a mechanical dictation. However, it is almost another extreme which balks at the notion that God as the principal author could have meant more by the words of Scripture than the human instrument did.⁵⁴

It is true, as Vawter states, that "the words of Scripture have been chosen by the sacred writer under the influence of the Holy Spirit," that "God himself wrote the text in the first place," and that he did it "through a condescension by which he accommodated himself to human speech of given ages, languages, and personalities."⁵⁵ However, it is not (strictly speaking) known for a fact that "the Scripture was produced by human authors *intending to convey their own minds* [italics added]."⁵⁶ The nature of intention on the part of the human authors is crucial for the present discussion. It is possible to distinguish kinds of intentions and this has a bearing on the validity of any concept of a single intent of Scripture.

Genres of Intentions?

The role and function of the human author is not identical throughout Scripture. The human author's involvement in epistolary writings is not in the same category as the involvement of the writer of historical narrative (albeit the latter may also have a theological purpose). Such involvement can be distinguished from the role of the prophet in prophetic literature. The prophet may record a vision which he has seen or may write down the exact words he is commanded to write (cf. Rev 1:11, 19; 2:1; 14:13; 19:9). This type of involvement can further be contrasted with the function of an author like Moses to whom was revealed words spoken by God before men were created and words spoken by men in private before he was born. While detailed and sophisticated refinements of these various types of

⁵³L. Gaussen's classic work *Theopneustia: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, rev. ed., trans. David Scott (Chicago: Moody, n.d.) 58-105, can be mentioned. Vawter has given an analysis of historical views from a Roman Catholic scholar's perspective in his *Biblical Inspiration*, 37-75, 95-119.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 115.

⁵⁵Vawter, "The Fuller Sense," 94.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 93.

involvement could be attempted, the present analysis will examine whether the intention of the divine author and the human author must be identical.⁵⁷

The lack of total or radical identity (confluence) between the intents of the human author and the divine can be demonstrated, for instance, in the matter of reporting the words of God. Gen 3:15 is a suitable illustration. Following man's sin and the Fall, God spoke to Adam, Eve, and the serpent. The meaning of God's words in Gen 3:15 was determined by God when they were spoken. Even before there could possibly have been any human authorial intention with respect to those words of God, the words had meaning and were communicated. God had his authorial intention before there was any human intermediary or human cognizance or intention involved in the message. Moreover, Moses never spoke those words—he merely reported them. Whereas Adam, Eve and the serpent heard that utterance of God, their understanding must not be confused with the ultimate meaning of the utterance.⁵⁸ When Moses reports those words, his "authorial intention" is not what *determines* their truth-intention. It must be assumed that Moses understood the utterance just as Adam and Eve did. But Moses as the human author of Genesis was not seeking to convey exhaustively all the implications which were in the awareness of God when he spoke those words in the garden. Moses' authorial intention in this case largely consisted of reporting the words. What can be said of Gen 3:15 can be said of many, indeed, of all other instances of similar reporting (e.g., Gen 12:1–3; 13:14–17; 15:18–21). If God retained in his own knowledge implications which were to be clearly unfolded only later, the truth or extent of the implications cannot be known merely by ascertaining the understanding of Moses.

God's authorial intention in the report of his own utterance includes both the truth-intention of the original utterance and the intention to report it in the Scriptures. Only the latter is shared by the human author. Therefore, even though the human and divine author have the same literary and theological intention in reporting the words, the meaning of God's statements is not determined by the human author's understanding.

⁵⁷The present writer's thinking on "kinds of intentions" as depicted in this section was initiated and helped by pertinent observations (though not necessarily in agreement with those I have listed) by Prof. Turner and fellow-student Stephen N. Shields in the class "Advanced Hermeneutics" taught by the former at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, during Winterim, 1984.

⁵⁸See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with Reader's Understanding," *Trinity Journal* 6 OS (1977) 190–93. See also, for biblical examples, John 2:19–22; 6:51–60.

One might ask, "If the meaning of the words of God reported by Moses is not to be ascertained by what Moses understood from the words, how is it to be understood?" In other words, "What means of determining meaning exist other than seeking the understanding of the Scripture-writer himself?" In answer to this, it should be noted first that the reporting of the words of another does not determine the meaning of those words. Second, the reporter's *understanding* does not determine meaning. Such has to be acknowledged in the case of ordinary life and must also be acknowledged in the case of the writers of Scripture. The writer's understanding need not and should not always limit the reader's understanding. Nevertheless, means to understand exist. The modern reader may be able to understand the words of God better than the prophet who merely reported them because God has shown (through the progress of revelation) more implications of his utterances than were revealed to the prophet. Of course, the modern reader faces linguistic, cultural, and historical handicaps which the reporting prophet did not face.

The writers of Scripture were extraordinary men in the sense that God especially equipped them for their task. God used even ungodly men like Balaam and Caiaphas to give his oracles, but the writers of Scripture were men of God (2 Pet 1:20-21). They were concerned about the meaning of revelation and they had deep insight into it. However, this fact does not remove the limitations of their finiteness and their ignorance of things not revealed to them.

Moses did not determine the meaning of divine utterances made to him or other persons since the truth-intention of such utterances was determined by God alone without simultaneous human involvement. Yet, the meaning of passages recording God's utterances is still the object of interpretation. The entire matter finds a nice summary in the following words of W. E. Vine:

Though the writers of Scripture wrote their statements intelligently, i.e., in language which was their own, yet frequently their conception of the meaning and application of what they wrote was narrower than the scope of their writings. The writers shared in the limitations of the readers in this respect. They themselves were cognizant of their limitations, although they were conscious of the Divine authority given them that made them realize that their writings covered a far wider range of meaning than could be measured by their own apprehension. To this the Scripture itself bears witness. For, firstly, we are told that they searched into their own records to examine the details of what the Spirit of Christ was testifying through them; and secondly, it was revealed to them that they were ministering not merely to the men of their own time but to God's people of the present age. . . . Similarly when Daniel was receiving Divine messages which he records in his prophecies he says, "I heard, but I understood not." The words were

intelligible as such, but their Divine meaning was “shut up and sealed” for the time (Dan 12:8, 9).⁵⁹

Relation of Prophetic Instrumentality to Human Will and Judgment

The contention that “whatever has been produced apart from the will and judgment . . . of the human author . . . has not been brought about precisely through human instrumentality,”⁶⁰ needs to be answered. Scriptural evidence seems to militate against an emphasis which inseparably links human will and judgment to prophetic instrumentality or the human authorship of Scripture. 2 Pet 1:21, speaking on the authorial role of the prophets who wrote Scripture, does not emphasize the active function of their will in the production of Scripture. Rather, it emphasizes their passivity in being borne along (φερομένοι) by the Holy Spirit. The emphasis of the Word of God is not upon the necessity of human understanding and the participation of human will in the production of Scripture. Instead, it emphasizes the divine source. Human instrumentality in delivering the word of God is frequently depicted in such a way that it does not demand the full participation of the speaker’s will and judgment.

The OT commonly represents prophetic instrumentality as God’s mouthpiece (בפה דבר/שם—Deut 18:18, Num 22:38; 23:5, 12, 16, etc. cf. Exod 4:12, 15, 16). Prophetic instrumentality (διὰ τοῦ προφήτου—Matt 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; Luke 18:31; Acts 2:16; 28:25, etc.) consists of sounding forth or vocalizing the divine message (ἐλάλησεν/προεῖπεν/προκατήγγειλεν [ὁ θεὸς] διὰ στόματος προφητοῦ—Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 3:18, 21). It would be a denial of the teaching of Scripture to say that the prophets had no understanding of the messages they delivered (cf. Matt 22:43; Acts 2:25 with 30–31, Rom 4:6; see 1 Cor 2:12–13; 1 Pet 1:11).⁶¹ It would also be contrary to common sense. How could the prophet not understand what his immediate audience was expected to understand? Yet the question remains whether human instrumentality in the communication/recording of divine revelation required meaning to be completely within the control of the human author’s cognitive faculties. A message in human language can have fuller meaning or implication to an audience than it has to the herald who announces it. Likewise, God does not demand

⁵⁹Vine, *Divine Inspiration of the Bible*, 21. The understanding of Dan 12:8, 9 should be qualified by Dan 10:1, which refers to chaps. 10–12. Yet it remains that much more is known of the “references” of the prophecies in these and other chapters of Daniel than Daniel himself knew. To argue that the *meaning* of these prophecies is “complete” without knowing their “references” would be similar to insisting that the *meaning* of messianic prophecies are “complete” without regard to the historical identity and fulfilled work of the Messiah.

⁶⁰Vawter, “The Fuller Sense,” 93.

⁶¹See Kaiser, “The Single Intent,” 137, 125–26.

exhaustive understanding in order for the prophet to function as a mouthpiece of God. Though it was an exceptional case, God showed that it is possible to communicate in human language through the instrument of an irrational creature (Num 22:28–30). The idea of confluence in authorial intention is not a biblical one, though it may be a Thomistic one. Coppens has stated that some object to *sensus plenior* because it

is contrary to the Thomistic notion of inspiration whereby Scripture and all its meanings are the result of the joint operation of God and His instrument. When the sacred writer ceases to play his part, there is no longer any Sacred Scripture.⁶²

Thus, it seems that some evangelicals begin with a construct of scholastic philosophy and then attempt to accommodate the phenomena of biblical revelation to it.

The fact that the Bible has two distinguishable authors has implications for the task of exegesis:

The mystery of the relationship between the human and the divine in Biblical authorship should not be set aside until exegesis is finished. It is just as much an error to emphasize the divine element at the expense of the human as it is to emphasize the human element at the expense of the divine. The Bible's human setting and human authorship makes it imperative that we gather all knowledge possible to interpret a text from its historico-cultural perspective. . . . But throughout this exegetical task, not just after, we must seek out the message, the teaching, the ultimate meaning—that is, how the Holy Spirit has used this passage to reveal the will of God.⁶³

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR DISTINCTION OF AUTHORIAL INTENTIONS

It can be exegetically demonstrated that Scripture does distinguish between the authorial intentions of God and those of the human

⁶²Joseph Coppens, "The Different Senses of Sacred Scripture," *TD* 1 (1953) 18. Cf. Coppens, "Levels of Meaning in the Bible," *Scripture: How Does the Christian Confront the Old Testament?* (ed. Pierre Benoit et al., Concilium vol. 30; New York: Paulist, 1968) 134, 135; and Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration*, 52–56. See also Aquinas's *Summa*, article 4 of both questions 171 and 173. Following a discussion of Caiaphas's prophecy he concluded: "Because a prophet's mind is a deficient instrument . . . even genuine prophets do not know all that the Holy Spirit intends in visions, words and even deeds" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 45, trans. and ed. Roland Potter [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970] 67).

⁶³Elmer B. Smick, "Old Testament Theology: The Historico-Genetic Method," *JETS* 26 (1983) 148.

author. This matter will be taken up under three headings: the nature of Messianic prophecy, the nature of prediction-fulfillment, and the nature of biblical types.

The Nature of Messianic Prophecy

1 Pet 1:10–12 has figured prominently in discussions pertaining to authorial intention and ignorance. It is one of the “alleged proof texts for ‘double meaning.’”⁶⁴ Familiar versions render the εἰς τίνα of v 11 as “what person.” But Kaiser, with impressive grammatical support, argues that the whole phrase εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν is a tautology for emphasis.⁶⁵ Even if it were granted that the phrase should be understood in this way, this scripture would still raise questions concerning authorial intentions. This passage, even though it does point out that the prophets knew something about the Messiah, at the same time also indicates limitations in their knowledge. The prophets prophesied, yet it was the Spirit of Christ within them who gave an “advance testimony” (προμαρτυρία) of events yet to occur.⁶⁶

This writer proposes a translation for εἰς τίνα which is preferable to the tautological understanding of the phrase. It should be rendered “for whom” or “for whose sake.” The apostle focused on two matters: the *time* of the revealing of God’s salvation and the *people* to whom it was revealed. As for the time, salvation was to be revealed in the last/end time (ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ, v 5). The prophets made careful search and inquiry as to the time of this revealing (ποῖον καιρὸν, v 11). This salvation has been revealed in the gospel which is *now* preached (ἃ νῦν ἀνγγέλη, v 12).

Peter also mentioned the people to whom this salvation was revealed by God. The gospel was preached to the recipients of Peter’s letter. Their election was in accordance with God’s foreknowledge. An inheritance is reserved for *them* (εἰς ὑμᾶς, v 4). The grace of God which was prophesied by the prophets came to *them* (εἰς ὑμᾶς, v 10). Concerning this grace the prophets had made careful search and inquiry. They sought to know “for whose sake” (εἰς τίνα) the Spirit was indicating these things (v 11). It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but Peter’s readers (οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δέ, v 12). Thus, if the two-fold mystery of *recipients* and *time of fulfillment* is noted, the phrase εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν makes clear sense.

⁶⁴Kaiser, “The Single Intent,” 125.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 125–26.

⁶⁶The grammar of v 11 does not require that the content of prophetic knowledge is being outlined when Peter says, “and the glories *that would follow*.” It can be understood that the time sequence is being indicated because Peter knew that the glory followed the suffering, and he is speaking from his own perspective.

When the Spirit of Christ in the prophets spoke through them, he was bearing witness or giving testimony to events in Christ's life before they happened. 1 Pet 1:12, along with other scriptures (e.g., Rom 1:2; 16:25, 26), show that details of OT prophecies unavailable to the OT prophet or hearer are now available. Such details were implied in the original prophecies and should not be disregarded in the interpretation of the OT. Certain parts of OT revelation, though intelligible to the immediate audience, had fullest impact upon a later people. Deut 18:15-18 can be cited in this regard. A very evident example, aside from Messianic passages, is the case of Isaiah at the turn of the eighth century. He prophesied of a sixth century Cyrus (Isa 45:1). Josiah was named in a prophetic message three centuries before his time (1 Kgs 13:2). That eschatological prophecies had meaning and significance for the immediate audience is not denied. However, detailed outlining of future events (as in Daniel 11) can only mean that a prophecy was meant mostly for the benefit of a later generation.

It becomes necessary, then, when interpreting such biblical texts, to do exegesis in the light of later revelation which explains fulfillment. Later revelation which provides the fuller implications of earlier messages must be distinguished, however, from application or significance. Into the latter category falls the teaching of Rom 4:23-24; 15:4; 1 Cor 9:9; etc.

The foregoing discussion indicates how authorial intention should be understood. If Messianic prophecies are primarily intended for people living after the coming of Christ (as 1 Pet 1:12 indicates), then the prophecies must be interpreted in the light of the Cross. Thus, 1 Pet 1:10-12 legitimizes *analogia fidei* as a proper principle of interpretation. This would mean also that Christians of the first century and later are better able to discern the full *implications* (i.e., details which were planned, purposed and executed by God) which belong to the *meaning* of the message of the prophets.

Analogy of How Much Scripture?

The analogy of *antecedent* Scripture as a strict canon of interpretation is not a valid one. This has been discussed above in reference to intrinsic genre. Some specific examples can be discussed. When later revelation clearly identifies the serpent of Genesis 3 as Satan (Rev 12; 20:2), the knowledge of such identity cannot and should not be shut out from the interpreter's mind. When Christ said in John 8:56 that Abraham rejoiced to see his day, this becomes a fact of Abraham's life and history even though the information is provided to the interpreter much later in the canon. If messianic awareness is attributed to Abraham, his life and history will be perceived and interpreted with altered emphasis. Indeed, exegetes often emphasize the

psychology of the biblical authors and characters in order to gain a fuller understanding of the text. When the NT reveals more facts concerning the persons and events of the OT than is available in the OT (cf. Hebrews 11; Jude 14, 15; and 2 Pet 2:6–7 on Cain and Abel, Abraham, Moses' parents, Moses, Enoch, and Lot), it is essential to approach the interpretation of the relevant portions of Genesis and the rest of the canon in the light of these facts. It must be confessed, however, that in the case of John 8:56 the task is not easy.

Another relevant consideration is the question of how people of OT times understood references to the Spirit of God, and how Christians, following the completion of the canon, understand the references.⁶⁷ It is doubtful that the OT saints, or the OT writers in particular, had the same notion concerning the Spirit of God which can be found in the NT. Yet the NT makes ample correlation between רוח אלהים (or רוח יהיה) and τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον (θεοῦ). The Spirit who spoke through the OT prophets is the third person of the Godhead. It is not right to confine oneself to Moses' understanding when Gen 1:2; 6:3; Num 11:25, 29 and other passages are read. God did not confine himself to Moses' understanding when he revealed those Scriptures.

Implications of the Doctrine of Inspiration for Interpretation

The analogy of antecedent Scripture does not take into account some of the implications which Scripture's inspiration holds for its interpretation. On a number of occasions the NT limits the interpretive options available to the modern exegete and scholar. A prominent example is the citation of Ps 8:5 in Heb 2:7, which, following the LXX, interprets אלהים of the MT as ἀγγέλους. In spite of the understanding of many translators and commentators, it is incorrect to understand אלהים in Ps 8:5 as meaning God.⁶⁸ However, even if current scholarship and exegetical insight found no precedent for rendering אלהים as "angels," an alternate interpretation could not be affirmed without impugning the authority of the book of Hebrews. Another example would be the restriction of the meaning of העלמה in Isa 7:14 to ἡ παρθένος in the light of Matt 1:23. In both of these instances there is more than the mere citation of the OT passage in the New. The argument of the NT in these cases is dependent upon the particular lexical choice. The bearing of such NT usage upon the exegesis of

⁶⁷Raymond E. Brown (*The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture* [Baltimore: St. Mary's University, 1955] 140) cites this as one of the examples given by de Ambroggi as "susceptible of a *sensus plenior*."

⁶⁸Cf. A. A. Anderson, *Psalms* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) 1:103; and Gleason L. Archer and G. C. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey* (Chicago: Moody, 1983) 59. After citing other OT examples, the latter state: "'A little lower than God' is totally unacceptable in view of the transcendence of God taught in the OT."

the OT passage is not controverted by the fact the NT in these instances follows the text-form of the LXX.⁶⁹ The lexical choice of the LXX translators amounts to extra-biblical testimony in harmony with the Scriptures.

The Nature of Prediction-Fulfillment

A study of prediction and fulfillment in the Scriptures serves to identify issues pertaining to authorial intent. A case to consider is Psalm 16 and its use in the book of Acts (2:25–33; 13:32–37). Two recent studies have paid great attention to the hermeneutical issues involved.⁷⁰ Kaiser employs “a blend of views between the ancient Antiochian concept of *theoria* and Willis J. Beecher’s concept of promise theology.”⁷¹ His view can be summarized as follows:

In Psalm 16, . . . David is God’s *hasid*, “favored one,” yet not David as a mere person but David as the recipient and conveyor of God’s ancient but ever-renewed promise. Therefore as Beecher concluded: “The man David may die, but the *hhasidh* is eternal. Just as David is the Anointed One, and yet the Anointed One is eternal; just as David is the Servant, and yet the Servant is eternal; so David is the *hhasidh*, and yet the *hhasidh* is eternal. David as an individual went to the grave, and saw corruption there, but the representative of Yahaweh [*sic*] eternal promise did not cease to exist” (Beecher, *Prophets and the Promise*, p. 325).⁷²

Kaiser believes that his approach has avoided the pitfalls of *sensus plenior* and similar “evils” as his conclusion states:

Without injecting any contrived artifices of dualism, docetism or spiritual hermeneutics, we believe that David, as the man of promise and as God’s *hasid*, was in his person, office and function one of the distinctive historical fulfillments to that word that he received about his seed, dynasty and throne. Therefore he rested secure in the confident hope that even death itself would not prevent him from enjoying the face-to-face fellowship with his Lord even beyond death, since that ultimate *hasid* would triumph over death. For David, this was all one word: God’s ancient but ever-new promise.⁷³

The elevation of the personage addressed in the psalm to a high degree of abstraction does not do away with *sensus plenior*, or the

⁶⁹Καλέσουσιν of Matt 1:23 occurs only in less than half of the LXX minuscules. Others have the third person singular or second person ending.

⁷⁰Kaiser, “The Promise to David”; and Johnson, “Author’s Intention.” Johnson sees “references *plenior*” in the psalm (p. 427).

⁷¹Kaiser, “The Promise to David,” 222.

⁷²Ibid., 225–26.

⁷³Ibid., 229.

issue of multiple fulfillments. The problem is clarified by what the Spirit of God says about this psalm through the apostles Peter and Paul.

Peter's exegetical logic (Acts 2:29–33) appears to run as follows:

1. The psalm *cannot* apply to David. The reason for this is that the "Holy One" will not see corruption; but David's body is still in the grave—decayed (2:29).
2. The psalm was not meant to apply to David. He was a prophet; he *looked ahead*. He predicted Christ's resurrection (2:30–32).
3. The prophecy was fulfilled in Christ (2:31–33).⁷⁴

If it is possible that David also envisioned himself as subject in the psalm, the fact would still remain that he died and has not yet experienced resurrection. In whatever manner Ps 16:10 could apply to him, it could not apply to Christ in the same way. That is to say, the *verbal meaning* of the scripture has to be construed differently when referring to David and to Christ.

That the postulation of generic entities does not solve the problem of the reality of concrete implications can be demonstrated from another NT citation from the Psalms. Acts 1:16 poses a far greater challenge to the theory of confluence in authorial intentions. Acts 1:16 reads, "It was necessary for the Scripture to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand concerning Judas." The following observations need to be made:

1. The prediction concerning Judas was γραφή (not just a subjective *sensus plenior*).
2. It was spoken περὶ τοῦ Ἰούδα (not merely a generic "enemy of the Anointed One").⁷⁵
3. It was spoken by the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David. Bruce's comments on this are very appropriate:

⁷⁴It should be noted that the present discussion is totally irrelevant if it is held that the psalm is entirely predictive. Kaiser's interpretation is still significant for the bearing it has on "the single intent." F. F. Bruce (*The Book of Acts* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 71) has observed that "In the psalm here quoted (Peter's argument runs), the words cannot refer to David." If this is correct, exegetes should not interpret it as referring to David.

⁷⁵The present writer does find useful the concept of "generic prophecy" for *understanding the psychology of the prophet* in such instances as the predictions of Joel and Malachi (which are discussed by Kaiser). See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. "The Promise of God and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit: Joel 2:28–32 and Acts 2:16–21," in *The Living and Active Word of God: Essays in Honor of Samuel J. Schultz* (ed. Morris Inch and Ronald Youngblood; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 109–22; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Promise of the Arrival of Elijah in Malachi and the Gospels," *GTJ* 3 (1982) 221–33.

For those who believed Jesus was the Messiah, this meant that many of the experiences predicted of the Psalmist (David) were understood as prophetically applicable to Jesus (Cf. Ch. 2:25ff., 34ff.). Then what was said of the Psalmist's enemies would be interpreted of the enemies of Jesus (Cf. Ch. 4:25ff.). . . . There are other places in NT where "testimonies" to the fate of Judas are quoted or alluded to. . . . So Peter here adduces further "testimonies" from the Psalter to the same effect. Their real author, he avers, is the Holy Spirit, who spoke through the prophets. David, being a prophet, was but a spokesman or mouthpiece of the inspiring Spirit.⁷⁶

4. The Psalm texts cited in Acts 1:20, therefore, were intended by the Holy Spirit to refer to the historical individual Judas and had to be fulfilled. They are not merely apostolic applications under the sanction of the Spirit of God. At the stage of their being uttered by David, God had Judas in mind.

The question must be asked whether David was really thinking of Judas when he wrote Ps 69:25 and Ps 109:8. There is no evidence in the psalms themselves that he was. Both psalms are fully applicable to David's own experience. In fact, Ps 69:5 cannot be a confession of David's antitype. To posit "generic" entities here cannot do away with the reality of concrete references.

The NT revelation here reveals the additional, fuller meaning of the OT text which could not be understood until a later stage of history. Yet, the meaning belongs with the OT scripture. Smick has stated the matter as follows:

The NT is in the context of the OT and as its historical goal reveals the total meaning of the OT. The NT writers themselves make clear to us the importance of the typological approach to the OT as an indispensable tool and exegetical method. They did not consider it as an arbitrary importation or as a way of ferreting out hidden meanings.⁷⁷

The Nature of Biblical Types

The predictiveness of types is a highly debated matter. But if the activity of God in inspiration is acknowledged, a predictive intention of biblical types may be acknowledged.⁷⁸ Additionally, there are exegetical evidences which show that God intended OT types to prefigure their antitypes. Such an intention may not have been shared by the human author. Two examples can be given.

⁷⁶F. F. Bruce, *Acts*, 48.

⁷⁷Smick, "Old Testament Theology," 152.

⁷⁸Cf. the view of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., *The Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) 56, 76.

Hebrews 8:5

The writer of Hebrews repeatedly emphasized that the institutions of the Old Covenant were symbolic and typical (8:2, 5; 9:9, 23, 24), and did not accomplish any service of lasting value (i.e., to expiate sins). The Old Covenantal institutions served to *illustrate* “better” things. The tabernacle itself was a copy of the “true” tabernacle, which is heaven itself (8:2; 9:23–24). In 8:5 there is a “Scriptural” proof for the symbolic (typical) significance of the tabernacle. The argument runs as follows.

The levitical priesthood served *in the context of* that which was a copy and shadow of heavenly things (οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν τῶν ἐπουρανίων—οἵτινες refers back to προσφερόντων). The dative can be considered instrumental (as BAGD indicates: “Hebrews also adds to λατρεύειν in the dative the holy object by means of which the priest renders service 8:5; 13:10.”)⁷⁹ It may be preferable, however, to take it as an associative dative⁸⁰ or even as locative of place (A. T. Robertson argues that these are not rare in the NT⁸¹). The writer of Hebrews goes on to prove that the tabernacle was a copy and shadow of heaven. He finds such an implication or evidence in God’s words to Moses.

When God gave Moses detailed instruction concerning how to build the tabernacle, he adjured him three times to follow the plans exactly (Exod 25:9, 40; 26:30). According to the author of Hebrews, the *reason* for such adjuration was the fact that the tabernacle was intended to reflect heaven.

The author introduces his argument with καθώς. Καθώς introduces the quotation, but it also thereby establishes connection between what follows and that which precedes it. That the tabernacle was a copy of heaven is demonstrated by God’s words to Moses,⁸² for (explanatory γάρ) “see,” he says, “that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.”

The relevance of this matter for any discussion of authorial intentions is this: when God said the above words to Moses, part of the reason for his doing so was the fact that the tabernacle was to be

⁷⁹See λατρεύω.

⁸⁰Cf. BDF, § 198 (5).

⁸¹A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 521.

⁸²Note the comments of F. F. Bruce in *Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 165: “For the earthly sanctuary from the outset was designed to be nothing more than a ‘copy and shadow’ of the heavenly reality. This is how our author understands the divine injunction to Moses, regarding the details of the tabernacle in the wilderness.”

a copy of heaven. Moses had to be careful to follow the "blueprint" exactly in order to preserve the pattern. The divine admonition had such a purpose in view, namely, the intention to provide a type. But was Moses aware of such intention?⁸³

The conclusion of the matter is that there was an implication or intention present in God's words to Moses which Moses was not aware of. It must at least be conceded that Moses did not leave a clear indication of his awareness of the typical intention that God had for the institution of the tabernacle. However, if Hebrews is interpreted grammatically and contextually, God's words to Moses definitely had such an implication. Such a meaning was "interpreted" from those words by the writer of Hebrews who is not reporting a new revelation but exegeting the OT to prove his point.⁸⁴ In the light of this fact, divine authorial intention cannot be identified with the understanding and intention of the human author to such an extent that the former is not in any manner or degree distinct from the latter.

The quotation from Exod 25:40 given in Heb 8:5 is another statement which involves the direct statement of God. This is similar to the case of Gen 3:15 dealt with previously. In the cases of "reporting" God's words by a human author, the student of Scripture may not be justified in restricting meaning to the human author's understanding. Divine authorial intention included whatever intention Moses had in writing the book of Exodus stemming from his understanding of these words. But the divine authorial intention involved, additionally, God's meaning and purpose for that statement itself. Over this matter Moses had no control. Neither did his understanding determine or limit the extent of implications which believers of a later time period might discern in the light of more facts progressively revealed.

Hebrews 9:8, 9

Heb 9:8, 9 presents additional thoughts concerning the meaning of the tabernacle. In 9:1-5 the OT tabernacle is described. In vv 6 and 7 the fact is pointed out that the outer court was constantly accessible but the Holy of Holies could be entered only once a year by the high

⁸³If Moses knew the intention on the part of God to provide a type, such awareness is not reflected in the text. However, if Moses was aware of a typical intention for the tabernacle, then, clearly, the type is "predictive." What shall be said, then, concerning the predictiveness of other Scriptural types?

⁸⁴There is room to consider that part of the teaching ministry of the Paraclete to the apostles (John 14:26; 16:13-15) was "illumination." Note, for instance, John's use of the word ἐμνήθησαν in John 12:16.

priest who would take with him the blood of the sacrifice which he offered for himself and for the people. This inaccessibility of the inner tabernacle had symbolic implications. From the nature of the service in the tabernacle the Holy Spirit showed that "the way into the holiest is not manifest while the first (i.e., the outer) tabernacle still has a standing/existence." This is a *παραβολή* for the time that has come. It is very unlikely that Moses meant that the inaccessibility of the inner tabernacle signified the *temporary* nature of that ministry. Neither is it likely that Moses meant that the way into the Holiest was *not yet* (μήπω) revealed or that the tabernacle had a "parabolic" lesson to teach. But the Holy Spirit, the divine author, was "revealing" (δηλοῦντος, 'making clear') such things.⁸⁵ Therefore, seeing the authorial intentions of the divine author and the human author to be thoroughly identical cannot be justified.

CONCLUSION

The present writer has attempted to show that a principle like, "The Bible is to be interpreted by the same rules as other books,"⁸⁶ is not an absolutely valid dictum for biblical interpretation when it comes to authorial intention. Divine accommodation in the use of human language is not tantamount to divine self-reduction of authorial intent to the understanding of the biblical writer.

By way of conclusion, the following statements could be repeated, though penned in an earlier generation. They reflect for the most part thoughts that summarize what has been stated in this paper.

What, then are we to understand by divine inspiration?

Divine inspiration is the mysterious power put forth by the Spirit of God on the authors of holy writ, to make them write it, to guide them even in the employment of the words they use, and thus to preserve them from all error.

What are we told of the spiritual power put forth on the men of God while they were writing their sacred books?

We are told that they were *led* or *moved* "not by the will of man, but by the Holy Ghost; so that they set forth the things of God, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." "God," says the apostle, "spake BY THE PROPHETS at sundry times, and in divers manners;" sometimes enabling them to understand what he made them say; sometimes without doing so. . . .

But what passed in their hearts and minds while they were writing?

⁸⁵This would be an appropriate place to discuss the role of divine illumination in exegesis. However, it is beyond the scope of this study.

⁸⁶Kaiser, "Legitimate Hermeneutics," 119.

This we cannot tell. . . .

What then must we think of those definitions of divine inspiration, in which Scripture seems to be represented as the altogether human expression of a revelation altogether divine? . . .

These definitions are not exact, and may give rise to false notions of inspiration. . . . They contradict facts. . . . In fact, they assume its being nothing more than the natural expression of a supernatural revelation; and that the men of God had merely of themselves, and in a human way, to put down in their books what the Holy Ghost made them see in a divine way, in their understandings. But inspiration is more than this. Scripture is not the mind of God elaborated by the understanding of man, to be promulgated in the words of man; it is at once the mind of God and the word of God

Finally, it is always the inspiration of the book that is presented to us as an object of faith, never the inward state of him that writes it. His knowledge or ignorance nowise affects the confidence I owe to his words; and my soul ought ever to look not so much to the lights of his understanding as to the God of all holiness, who speaks to me by his mouth.⁸⁷

⁸⁷Gaussen, *Theopneustia*, 106–12.

REVIEW ARTICLE

Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense

GEORGE J. ZEMEK, JR.

Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics, by R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. Pp. 364. \$12.95.

It is increasingly rare these days to find a book in which the contents really correspond to its title. However, this volume is indeed both a presentation and defense of "classical" apologetics and a critique of presuppositionalism. Furthermore, it is well written (especially in those difficult portions dealing with sophisticated philosophical interactions) and fairly well organized. However, the format employing endnotes is inconvenient.

The greatest asset of Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley's argumentation is at one and the same time this volume's greatest deficit—an *uncompromising* defense of traditional apologetics. They certainly cannot be charged with ambivalence, but they frequently may be perceived by the reader as being arrogantly dogmatic. Consider, for example, the following excerpts:

If there is no reasoned defense for the Christian faith there can be no sound Christianity [p. 97]. . . . At their classical best, the theistic proofs are not merely probable but demonstrative [p. 101]. . . . We have endeavored to update the traditional theistic arguments, trying to show that when properly formulated they are compelling certainties and not merely suggestive possibilities [p. 136]. . . . Miracles are visible and external and perceivable by both converted and unconverted alike, carrying with them the power to convince, if not to convert [p. 145]. . . . Aquinas, Edwards, Butler, Reid, Warfield, Beattie, Orr, and others . . . were assuming, *rightly we believe* [*italics added*], that the mind as a faculty or power remained and functioned as it was intended to do. Therefore, it can and does survey the evidence and it can and does draw proper conclusions, with detachment and neutrality [p. 258]. . . . We have seen that the traditional view sees natural man as capable of understanding not only the world but the Bible itself. The unregenerate need no supernatural, spiritual, illumination to understand anything of which the human mind is capable . . . [p. 298]; [etc.].

From this inflexible perspective they often criticize such apologetical 'compromisers' as Geisler, Montgomery, Pinnock, and others (cf. pp. 125-26, 148)!

Nothing interrupts the authors' tenacity to traditionism. They are not deterred by the reservations of their verificationist contemporaries, nor by the *balanced* arguments of Augustine, Luther and Calvin, and most unfortunately, not even by exegetical theology. Historical tradition, auspiciously labeled by them as "classical" and "Reformed" (e.g., pp. 296, 319, etc.), is their ultimate yardstick. This becomes most conspicuous in their critique of presuppositionalism:

Presuppositionalism has become the majority report today among Reformed theologians, although it cannot even be called a minority report of church history. If Charles Hodge is right [for them this is a Class I assumption], that what is new is not true and what is true is not new, presuppositionalism, being new, falls of its own weight [p. 183]. . . . We will show that this new apologetic was virtually unheard of for eighteen centuries, only coming into its own in this one [p. 188].

Besides reminding the authors that justification by faith did not "come into its own" until the sixteenth century, it must be said that their classical position has a massive Romanist footing and foundation. In the volume they skillfully circumvented this fact with only one passing paragraph (p. 210). Consequently, for these reasons and more importantly exegetical ones the following statement by the authors should be no cause of embarrassment to the presuppositionalist: "But, we hope . . . that presuppositionalists and other fideists [sic] think wishfully that the traditional position supports them will grant that it does not" (p. 211).

Undoubtedly, the greatest shortcoming of this treatise is its detachment from the moorings of biblical exegesis. Although the authors are long on polemical engagements with Van Til and others in the philosophical arena in which they sometimes prove themselves as victors, they forfeit many battles in the arena of theological exegesis. This charge will be substantiated specifically in the following pages of this review; however, a preliminary criticism needs to be made in reference to one assumption which permeates their whole argument. This assumption is that there is a dichotomy between "mind" and "heart" (cf. pp. ix, 21, 219, 243, 297, etc.). However, if one conducts a careful investigation of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ / καρδία (i.e., the seat of *both* rational *and* volitional functions) in anthropologically and hamartologically significant contexts, the endeavor yields more than sufficient evidence to render their above assumption a biblically false dichotomy. Not so incidentally, it is in this area of theological exegesis that presuppositionalism displays its *preeminent* attribute: "Thus, for the presuppositionalist, theology and apologetics are inseparable. A sound theology is essential for a sound apologetic" (p. 187).

Prior to a chapter by chapter critique, a word needs to be said about the seemingly incongruous dedication of *Classical Apologetics* "to Cornelius Van Til who has taught a generation that Christ is the Alpha and Omega of thought and life." Apart from these words and one edifying paragraph (pp. 183-84), Van Til is sometimes caricatured during the authors' critique of presuppositionalism (e.g., pp. 234-39, 263, etc.). A tactic of guilt by association (especially with existential and Neoorthodox fideists) is also employed. This reviewer found such apparent innuendoes offensive.

"The Crisis of Secularism" is the topic of chap. 1. Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley draw a proper distinction between "secular" and "secularism" (along with other -isms, pp. 3-5). After some good observations relating to the meaning and impact of secularism (pp. 6-12), they attribute its epidemic to the wrong cause—the waning of traditional apologetics (p. 12).

A brief but bold definition of apologetics stands at the head of chap. 2 (i.e., "The Task of Apologetics"): "Apologetics is the reasoned defense of the Christian religion" (p. 13). It is in this chapter that the authors begin their guilt by association arguments. Anti-rationalistic existentialists are associated with theological fideists (pp. 13-17; cf. p. 33; etc.) leading to the conclusion that "presuppositionalism is orthodoxy's defense of no-reasoned defense for Christianity" (p. 16). In response to this it is their "hope" that "presuppositionalism will be giving way more and more to classical apologetics as a reasonable modern response *to reasonable modern people who want a reason why they should believe*" (p. 16, italics added). The emphasized portion of this quotation draws attention to their hamartiological deficiency which will characterize the rest of the volume. That their "hope" is naively idealistic is intimated not only by biblical theology but also by their concession on the very next page: "Sin complicates both the knowing and the object known, adding clarification to the already heavy responsibility of apologetics" (p. 17). Yet it becomes progressively obvious that the authors do not view this truth as seriously as they should.

The portion of chap. 2 dealing with "Apologetics: God's Example and Command" suffers from quantitative and qualitative deficiencies. It is far too brief to support the dogmatic conclusions postulated by the authors. Their conclusions regarding a normative methodology are in need of biblical modification in the light of prevalent scriptural evidences substantiating a presuppositional model. Also, their restriction of διαλέγομαι to a technically philosophical sphere of usage fails to understand Luke's employment of the term in its common first-century context of the Jewish synagogue (i.e., a preaching and teaching emphasis, not a polemical one; cf. Schrenk, "διαλέγομαι, διαλογίζομαι, διαλογισμός," *TDNT* 2 [1964] 94-95; and Fürst, "διαλογίζομαι," *NIDNTT* 3. 821; etc.).

"Natural Theology and Fideism" are on center stage in chap. 3. At the outset the authors call attention to some important distinctions; for example, "there is a crucial difference between natural (general) *revelation* and natural *theology*" (p. 26). After a preliminary historical survey of natural theology emphasizing the skepticism of the philosophical fideists (pp. 26-35; note the rare concession that the existential fideism of Barth was "unalloyed"; cf. p. 34 on "Barth's *type* of fideism" [italics added]), they bring forth their major contention in the section entitled "the 'Back of the Book' Method": "But the question remains: do we move from general revelation to special revelation or from special revelation to general revelation?" (p. 36). Much of the subsequent development of their treatise deals with this issue of sequential priority as it relates to the apologetical task. However, let it be said that the biblical data seems to support a both/and *perspectival* emphasis which would indicate that the data are not intended to force an issue of methodological priority. Should one feel compelled to make a decision at this juncture, Kuyper's is preferable

in the light of mankind's epistemological predicament outlined in Romans 1 and in other places (cf. also Reymond's *The Justification of Knowledge*): "According to Kuyper there is a general revelation but no correct natural theology unless and until one has the light of special revelation" (p. 38).

Chap. 4, "The Biblical Evidence Confirming Natural Theology," is the most exegetically oriented chapter in the book. However, some of the most crucial scriptural data were either not mentioned or not stressed. Concerning Romans 1, the authors made several good points, e.g., "suppression of the truth is at the heart of Paul's indictment of paganism" (p. 42). They also mentioned the significance of God's nature being "clearly perceived" in natural revelation (p. 43); nevertheless, their case could have been strengthened all the more by some significant observations on the force of καθοράω. An extremely significant conclusion arises from this: "In Romans 1:20, Paul is affirming that humans can in fact move from the phenomenal realm to the noumenal realm, making the dispute with Kant all the more vivid" (p. 44). Their point is well taken; however, one must never forget the undergirding context of Rom 1:18–3:20 (e.g., mankind's suppression of truth and God's judicial abandonment of the race). The authors are certainly justified in criticizing those who water down the teaching of Rom 1:19–20 (cf. pp. 48–49), but they appropriately concede the enormous difficulty anyone encounters in trying to systematize an epistemology based upon the exegetical data of Romans 1 (p. 50; cf. David L. Turner, "Cornelius Van Til and Romans 1:18–21," *GTJ* 2 [1981] 45–58).

"There are those who argue that the objective general revelation is there for all to see, but that because of the fall into sin and especially because of the influence of sin on the mind (the noetic effects of sin) the objective revelation never gets through, it is not subjectively appropriated" (p. 47). Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley fail to heed the exegetical and theological evidence that motivates this conclusion. Although the authors mention Rom 1:21b and 1:28 (cf. pp. 52–56), they refuse to accept the practical epistemological implications of mankind's futility in reference to his reasonings (διαλογισμοῦς), his darkened mind (ἄσύνετος καρδιά; cf. 1 Cl 36:2), and God's giving them over to an unapproved, depraved mind (ἁδόκιμος νοῦς). This and other biblical data stand conspicuously opposed to their bold conclusions (cf. their assertions 7–9 on p. 62). In addition, their apologetical mandate "to establish once again a sound natural theology" (p. 63) is an exercise in futility in the light of mankind's moral and noetic predicament (cf. Gen 6:5; 8:21; Mark 7:20–23; Eph 4:17–19; etc.).

Chap. 5 dealing with method is a strange admixture of dogmatism and reservation (contra their reprimand of compromisers mentioned at the outset of this review). The strongest point of this chapter is its periodic appeal to pragmatic argumentation. For example, they commendably expose dialectical gibberish (a la Barth, *et al.*): "Talking in contradictions is nonsense, regardless of how transcendently profound it may sound" (p. 76). Concerning "the Law of Noncontradiction as a Universal Prerequisite for Life" (pp. 80–82), the authors astutely remark, "All people hold to it in *fact*, though some do deny it" (p. 80). Additionally, in reference to the "law of causality," it is observed that "it too may be denied by the mouth but not by the life" (p. 84). One

could wish that this refreshing practicality would infiltrate some of their errant extrapolations.

Some key reservations which *they* honestly acknowledge need to be pointed out. Of significance is the affirmation that "variant epistemologies produce variant conclusions" (p. 67). They also acknowledge that "logical errors occur in the application of the law of causality. The fallacies of faulty causal generalization and of false cause are perils to the application of the law" (p. 83). In other places the following cautions are posted:

Because our senses are fallible and limited we speak of *basic* or *rudimentary* reliability of sense perception rather than *total*, *perfect*, or *infallible* reliability. . . . The barrier to achieving perfect universality of classification is not merely the weakness of our sensory equipment or apparatus but the limits of the *scope* of our investigation, limits that are imposed by space and time. . . . It is because of this problem of the relationship between induction and certainty that many Christian apologists have sought to avoid any dependence on empirical data for building a case for the existence of God. . . . To venture into the empirical realm of sense perception is assumed to necessitate a foray into the hopeless land of probability and its attending levels of uncertainty [again, cf. some of the reservations of the compromisers]. . . . This is what motivates the presuppositional apologists to begin their apologetics with the assumption of the existence of God [pp. 87, 88, 89].

In spite of these and other significant reservations, the authors' verificational dogmatism is not stifled: "We will endeavor to show that we can move from the phenomenal to the noumenal by the application of the law of noncontradiction, the law of causality, and the basic reliability of sense perception" (p. 89). The primary factor of underestimation which has contributed to this unjustifiable dogmatism is in the area of what they call "psychological prejudice" (pp. 69-70). Although the authors acknowledge that "even a sound epistemic system, flawless deductive reasoning, and impeccable inductive procedure does not guarantee a proper conclusion" (p. 69; cf. the practical and theological reasons given for this on p. 70!), they fail to apply the hamartiological connection to method. Although they concede "if we consider common ground to mean a common perception and perspective of reality, then obviously no such common ground for discussion exists between believer and unbeliever" (p. 70), yet they champion a common *epistemological* ground. Incidentally, they subsequently speak of "*a kind of common ground*" (p. 71, italics added) which in its paragraph context is the very same "kind" supported by Van Til!

A well-argued case for the ontological argument as developed by Anselm and perfected especially by Edwards is offered in chap. 6. Although Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley's communication is extremely sharp in reference to this profound philosophical debate, they necessarily succumb to that which they hate; they introduce into their argument several nondemonstrable assumptions. For example, the very last sentence of the chapter presuppositionally asserts: "*Infinite being must exist because we cannot conceive of its not existing*" (p. 108). Some of the other assumptions standing behind this bold conclusion are:

Once we think of the possibility of God, everything is proven. *To think of being is to know being* [p. 101]. . . . We cannot think of the nonexistence of perfect, necessary being. Therefore, that being must exist [p. 102]. . . . When one adds the simple observation that the necessary proof of anything is the inability to think of its nonexistence, this establishes the necessary existence of the perfect being [p. 103]. . . . But the idea of a necessary being does include in it eternally necessary existence [p. 106] . . . ; [etc.].

Such boldness has resulted from the authors' failure to heed at least two warnings. The first has to do with the justifiable reservations of moderate rationalists; it is the warning that one must not leap from ontological probability to ontological certitude (once again, remember the compromisers). The second warning is far more serious; it involves the practical implications of a biblical hamartiology. That the authors are once again culpable may be illustrated through the implications of statements of theirs such as: "But does *a human seeking God* prove the finding of Him?" (p. 99, italics added). In the light of Psalm 14 (cf. Psalm 53), Romans 3, etc., they need to submit their assumptions and conclusions to an exegetical scrutiny pertaining to a scripturally sound and practical view of man and sin.

Chap. 7 organizationally follows with their defense of "the Cosmological and Teleological Arguments." The bottom line of their "updated" defense (cf. p. 136) is once again the tally of several nonverifiable assumptions. It should be pointed out, however, that there are several noteworthy concessions and challenges recorded in this chapter. Concerning the former, the authors well note:

We say that the cosmos, which *almost* all of us recognize, argues a Cosmic Mind, which all of us should acknowledge. If we do not, it must be for some reason other than lack of orderliness. . . . It will turn out that *a priori* we do not believe that there is a Cosmic Mind. . . . Because of our *a priori*, we will not allow ourselves to see a posteriori evidence of an orderly cosmos. *None are so blind as those who will not see* [p. 115, italics added].

Concerning significant challenges, the one relating to Montgomery's improper utilization of John 7:17 is illustrative:

But this is not the way Christ intended this statement: First, this cannot be an invitation to an unbeliever to experiment because it is morally impossible for an unbeliever to do the will of God. To do God's will one must begin by believing in Him and repenting of one's sins which, *ex hypothesi*, an unbeliever will not do. An experimenting unbeliever is a contradiction in terms. . . . So far from this text being an invitation to unbelievers to experiment, it is a rebuke to them that their not doing God's will is the source of their blind unbelief [p. 127].

Such biblically based concessions and challenges need to be taken far more seriously by the authors themselves. One wonders about their theological and apologetical assumptions when they pose the following questions (p. 127):

What objection is there against logical compulsion? What is logic if it is not compelling? If the case for Christianity is merely suggestive, or merely makes consideration feasible or intelligible or respectable, why should anyone convert?

Are we to believe that logic usurps the prerogatives of the omnipotent Spirit (e.g., John 16:8)?

Chap. 8, "Supernatural Revelation and Miracles," is unfortunately characterized by axiomatic excess as illustrated by the following quotation: "Now we have thus *proved* that the Bible is the Word of God on this formula: Natural revelation plus miracle plus claimed revelation proves revelation" (p. 159, italics added). (For a full critique of the major problems of their argument, see: Gary Phillips, "Apologetics and Inerrancy: An Analysis of Select Axiomatic Models" [Th.D. diss., Grace Theological Seminary, 1985].) Practically speaking, apologetical finesse is exalted to the place of assisting the sovereign Spirit via a pre-Testimonium: "There is no circle here because when the Word testifies to the Spirit it has already been established as the Word of God by apologetics" (p. 141). For a presuppositional approach see James M. Grier, "The Apologetic Value of the Self-Witness of Scripture," *GTJ* 1 (1980) 71-76.

Their whole argument is doomed to failure because of their hamartologically naive first premise: "It is *virtually* granted that the Bible (not assumed to be inspired) contains *generally reliable* history" (p. 141, italics added). Then they put forth an apologetical task of sheer frustration: "To those outside the church, the case for basic reliability must be made" (p. 142). To this is added their argumentation concerning miracles: "From an *un-inspired* Bible we are arguing for miracles, and from miracles we are arguing for an *inspired* Bible" (p. 144). This they assure the reader is not arguing in that ever-dreaded circle. From their perspective (and ours, i.e., the Christian's *Weltanschauung*) the conclusions flow quite naturally:

The biblical miracles need to be considered on their own merits. Their impossibility, or even improbability, has never been demonstrated. We have positive evidence for their occurrence. The *reasonable person* [italics added] will believe that they occurred as recorded. . . . But if our argument is sound, then *rational and honest people* [italics added] must not only believe *that* the Bible so teaches but they must also believe *what* the Bible teaches [pp. 152, 153].

But where are these "reasonable," "rational and honest people" to be found "outside the church?" Outside of Christ are only those who are actively hostile in their minds to the things of God (cf. ὄντας . . . ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ in Col 1:21; etc.). Not only is this problem found outside the flock but it often plagues the sheep of the fold (contra some of the authors' unqualified assertions on pp. 140-41, etc.). Even after the disciples witnessed incontestable miracles they still demonstrated symptoms of 'heart trouble' (e.g., Mark 6:51-52); after they had received intensive instruction on the resurrection (e.g., Mark 8:31ff.), they still refused to receive the testimony of the witnesses (cf. Luke 24:1-11). They just were not very reasonable!

The relationship of "the Spirit, the Word, and the Church" is briefly surveyed in chap. 9. Some positive contributions include their discussions of the pneumatological significance of Pentecost (p. 165), the statement about predestination as it relates to apologetics (p. 167), and the acknowledgement that Christ's testimony to the Word of God is ultimate (pp. 177-78). However, once again, it is apparent that the second and third of these observations never become apologetically determinative for the authors.

At the outset there is a slight contradiction concerning the Spirit's testimony to Messiah (cf. pp. 162-63). There are, however, more significant

hermeneutical and theological problems either in the chapter or as it relates to the rest of the volume. For example, John 14:26 is inappropriately used to support a *general* testimonium (pp. 166, 168). John 14:26, 15:26–27, and 16:13 undoubtedly have a special application to the apostles. Similarly, 1 Cor 2:9 is used initially without qualification (p. 167); however, later some important observations provide clarification (p. 171). The biggest disappointment of the chapter concerns those pneumatological truths which are practically forgotten or rendered impotent in the subsequent development of their apologetical methodology. The authors themselves state, “We know persuasion is not by apologetic might, nor rational power [and yet compare the contents and critique of their last chapter!], but by the Spirit of the Lord. . . . The Spirit of God testifies to the Word of God” (pp. 167, 178). However, these statements are contradicted by their assertions in the previous chapter (see the comments above).

Chap. 10 (i.e., “An Outline of Presuppositional Apologetics”) introduces the major points of tension between historical verificationism and presuppositionalism. Several observations based upon this chapter have already been made in the general portion of this critique. But let me state two further observations. First, the authors express their aversion to circular argumentation (p. 188). However, they ignore the larger philosophical problem of the universal necessity of beginning with nondemonstrable assumptions. Second, they express their concern that presuppositionalism represents a departure from Reformed theology (p. 184). However, departures from orthodoxy are conspicuously related to verificationist preoccupations.

Chap. 11 is characterized by overstatements, understatement, and even by non-statements. It is best to explain this last criticism first. In a historical survey of traditional apologetics it is interesting to note the conspicuous absence of Aquinas and the Romanist core of this tradition. Rather the authors apparently choose to become carefully selective namedroppers as reflected in their chapter title, “General Apologetic Tradition on Reason and Faith: Augustine, Luther, and Calvin.”

Their survey of the evidence from Augustine seems to be well balanced (cf. pp. 189–96). Faith and reason do not appear to be mutually exclusive for Augustine; nevertheless, it is obvious that he put things into perspective through a sound hamartiology (cf. pp. 193–94).

The too brief discussion on Luther and reason (pp. 196–98) opens with one of those aforementioned understatement: “Martin Luther is notorious for his opposition to reason” (p. 196). Modification of that observation is suggested but not supported by *primary* sources. Their reliance upon one secondary source (i.e., B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason*) leaves the reader unconvinced.

Another understatement introduces the section entitled “Calvin and Reason” (pp. 198–208): “There has been considerable debate about the nature of Calvin’s position on the knowledge of God” (p. 198). An essentially credible survey ensues. However, it is doubtful that Calvin really “regarded” the theistic arguments “as compelling” (p. 203) or that he “regarded evidence as a foundation for faith” (p. 206). In the context of Calvin’s overall theology, these appear to be overstatements on the part of the authors.

As has been previously acknowledged Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley have not only pointed out some verifiable inconsistencies in Van Til's epistemology, etc., but they have also distorted some of the essentials of his presentation as used to exemplify presuppositionalism. Chap. 12, "The Starting Point: Primacy of the Intellect and Autonomy," may be used to illustrate this point. Some examples of fair evaluation occur sporadically on pp. 212, 223, and 231-33. However, these are overshadowed by misconceptions, unfair evaluations, and invalid conclusions based upon distorted and/or false assumptions. Often these occur amidst or at the end of some credible critiques. For example, after a few quotations from Van Til in which he genuinely acknowledges the noetic effects of sin, the authors caricature his position with the following words: "Human reason, which is a God-given instrument for truth [i.e., their presupposition which is never substantiated via exegetical theology], has become an instrument leading to error. In that case, human mental faculties (not only holiness) have been *eradicated* by the Fall" (p. 213, italics added). No presuppositionalist, including Van Til, would have argued that way. The authors flagrantly deny any noetic effects of the Fall, and furthermore boldly assert that "this is theological error, as well as an apologetic fatality. Van Til has not answered his critics because, believing as he does, he cannot" (p. 213). From the tenor of Van Til's *total* presentation and from the meager exegetical correctives mentioned in this critique, it seems obvious that they are the ones who are errant theologically. But it must be remembered that for them theology is apparently subservient to apologetics!

In another place they interact with secondary sources (e.g., p. 216) and conclude that presuppositionalists are hyper-Calvinistic (p. 217). Rather than proceeding down this avenue and utilizing their construct of 'Reformation theology' as the ultimate yardstick, one wishes they would consider in a profound way the exegetical and apologetical implications of passages such as 1 Cor 2:14. Selective allusions to 1 Cor 2:14a will not do (cf. pp. 216-18, *passim*), and besides, reflection upon the impact of the *whole* verse might have kept them from making embarrassing statements like the following: "If the unregenerate do not 'see' it, it is only because they *will not*, not because they *cannot*" (p. 218, please note the italics are theirs). Note especially what the last part of 1 Cor 2:14 says: "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them (καὶ οὐ δύναται γινῶναι), because they are spiritually appraised" (1 Cor 2:14)! Besides this straightforward assertion, the Spirit in other places reminds us that noetic inability is all the more complicated by Satanic blindness (e.g., 2 Cor 4:3-4).

On the crucial issue of autonomy, the authors accurately note Van Til's key contribution: "Van Til thus rejects any element of neutrality in the non-Christian mind" (p. 232). What surfaces in this portion (pp. 231-40) are two definitions of autonomy: one derived philosophically and methodologically (i.e., theirs) and the other derived theologically (Van Til's). Therefore, they argue from their definitional benchmark that "given Van Til's notion of autonomy, it is agreed that autonomous humanity cannot accept any higher authority. As we have shown repeatedly [i.e., via philosophical and methodological extrapolation], however, that is not a proper usage of autonomy"

(p. 234). We are seemingly confronted with a presuppositional deadlock in reference to an apologetically strategic definition; however, the concept which is based upon a biblical hamartiology is surely the acceptable one.

Now comes the Achilles' heel of the volume, chap. 13, "The Noetic Influence of Sin." Actually, their approach to this issue was unveiled in chap. 12; therefore, it would seem that this chapter is basically a summary-conclusion of a position which has already been delineated. Consequently, a detailed critique would be redundant. Interestingly, the authors note at the outset that "the subject we now consider—the presuppositionalist view of noetic influence of sin—is supposed to show *why* the nonpresuppositionalist errs" (p. 241). Although the authors fail to concede this, indeed it does; it is *their* Achilles' heel!

Once again at a strategic juncture scriptural exegesis is notably absent. Instead their defense commences with a section entitled "Classic Calvinists on the Noetic Influence of Sin" (pp. 241–43). Additionally, a retreat to the false anthropological dichotomy of "heart" and "mind" recurs: "We suggest that classic Reformed orthodoxy saw the noetic influence of sin not as direct through a totally depraved mind, but as *indirect* through the totally depraved heart" (p. 243). Selectively utilizing the data of Romans 1, the authors resist acknowledging the epistemological paradox of mankind's having knowledge in one sense and yet not having it in another. Nevertheless, they seem to feel quite comfortable in saying that mankind's mind is not reprobate; however, God has judicially delivered the race over to a reprobate mind (p. 244). Arguing practically, as they have done on occasion, is not applied herein, and a consistent hamartiology is not evident.

Chap. 15 (i.e., "The Attack on the Theistic Proofs") perpetuates the same line of argumentation as the two previous chapters but with a growing boldness—man's mind, apparently unscathed by the Fall, becomes an impartial judge (cf. pp. 257–58). This new boldness apparently feeds an invigorated vitriolic criticism of Van Til and other presuppositionalists. Guilt by association arguments abound with only a few disclaimers (cf., e.g., "Presuppositionalism's Agreement with Neo-Orthodoxy," pp. 253–59). Their conception of "Calvinistic tradition" is again brought in as the ultimate canon (pp. 256–57), and their ubiquitous dichotomy of "mind" and "heart" is coregent (pp. 257–58). Concerning this latter observation, the authors' boldness reaches an unabashed level when they accuse Rushdoony of "surreptitiously" confusing these key anthropological terms! He may be culpable, but their own confusion is much more dramatically obvious.

The last portion of this chapter is launched with the following castigation: "Having observed presuppositionalism's agreement on the theistic proofs (Van Til's in particular) with contemporary neo-orthodoxy and secularism, we will now observe its disagreement with traditional orthodoxy" (p. 259). It is in this portion that some of Van Til's inconsistencies (a few of which are justifiable in the light of Scriptural data) are manipulated and caricatured in a critique which reaches its ebb (cf. esp. p. 263).

As a point of order, this reviewer and many other presuppositionalists would strongly disagree with the authors' statement that Clark is "perhaps the most thoroughgoing presuppositionalist of them all" (p. 265; cf. their own delayed disclaimer on p. 334). In their subsequent discussion an important

concession surfaces: "It is true that people do not acquiesce in the God of natural revelation until they are illumined by the God of special revelation. But saying that there is no *acquiescence* in natural revelation apart from special revelation does not deny natural revelation" (p. 268). Quite true, but it does deny any apologetical compulsion inherent in a natural *theology*, contrary to previous suggestions by the authors.

A topic introduced in chap. 14 is summarized in chap. 15—"The Attack on Christian Evidences." Two different assumptions clash again in this chapter:

Supposedly, the Bible is the foundation of Van Til's thought. Actually, it is the foundation of the foundation. For what is crucial is not merely the Bible, but the way by which Van Til comes to the Bible. He claims a sound approach to the Bible; we think he has an unsound approach to the Bible [p. 277].

The authors' assumptions will never change unless they allow apologetics to become subservient to theology. Since they do not, they castigate Van Til's severe restrictions of Christian evidences: "For Van Til, the resurrection of Jesus Christ (which he believes fervently and preaches vigorously) proves absolutely nothing" (p. 283). It should be remembered that not only presuppositionalists object to unqualified evidentialism but so do many verificationists (i.e., the compromisers). Failing to recognize any limitation in reference to Christian evidences, the authors are compelled to substitute a strained and unconvincing argument (pp. 283-86).

The chapter concludes with Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley's most ironical critique which pertains to the absolutely vital issue of inerrancy. Presuppositionalism is not to be blamed for the darkening eclipse of inerrancy as they postulate. Rather the growing preoccupation with evidentialism is darkening the bibliological horizon. Contemporary historical corroborations of bibliological erosion come through institutional (e.g., Fuller Seminary) and personal (e.g., Pinnock) examples. Speaking from the perspective of human responsibility, the greatest sustainer of inerrancy is a humble-minded apologetic thoroughly dominated by the Word and the Spirit.

An allergy of the authors to anything paradoxical lies at the heart of their critique of presuppositionalism in chap. 16. Characteristically, they lead off with a sensationalistic statement concerning presuppositionalism. In this context it is its tenet of "the self-attesting God": "It makes Karl Barth look like the champion of 'system' and Emil Brunner the most consistent of theologians" (p. 287). They unfortunately illustrate their objections first through a discussion which has historically evolved beyond the exegetical data (i.e., the lapsarian controversy, pp. 287-91). With the exception of their valid criticism of Van Til's holding that Adam "was created only *posse peccare*" (p. 289), the rest of their objections are suspect due to misinterpretations of Van Til and/or the biblical data. For example, it is apparent that they interpret Van Til's reference to "'the sovereign grace of God freely proclaimed'" as "mere *arbitrary* grace" (p. 288). One might ask who is now bearing the earmarks of hyper-Calvinism? Similarly, they assert, "Of course, reprobation is a decree of God, as truly and therefore as ultimately as election" (p. 288). Not one exegetical insight is offered from Romans 9 nor from anywhere else, however. The primary irritant responsible for their allergy is

their failure to accept the practical implications of passages like Isa 55:8-9 and Rom 11:33. Instead, they leave the impression that they have thoroughly integrated the biblical data and so conclude that "Divine 'control' and significant human choices hardly constitute a rational difficulty or apparent contradiction, not to mention paradox" (p. 291). There is an apparent softening at the end of the chapter (p. 295); however, it indeed is only apparent when couched in the context of their whole argument.

Due to the hamartiological concessions which have permeated their whole treatise, chap. 17's discussion of "the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit" is anemic. It does begin, however, with a very accurate critique: "The testimony of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the heart of presuppositionalism" (p. 296). As one might anticipate by now, the authors' subsequent evaluation of this crucial constituent comes via their conception of "traditional Reformed doctrine" (pp. 296-98). Besides another appeal to the alleged heart/mind dichotomy as popularized by Edwards, the substance of their argumentation may be summarized in their appeal to Owen: "We allow, then, that every man with reason and understanding and having the regular use of them, may, *without the saving agency of the Holy Spirit*, according to the measure of his ability, find out the true sense of these propositions and retain their meaning" (p. 297). Unfortunately, the authors have emphasized the wrong portion of Owen's quotation. Rather, the words "according to the measure of his ability" ought to have been emphasized and evaluated by Scripture and even by "traditional Reformed doctrine." Then the measurement of that ability according to both of these yardsticks would total zero. This too abbreviated chapter concludes with a critique of Frame and Dooyeweerd. Their critique of Frame is defensive and borders on being tactless by any standard (pp. 299-303).

A previously discussed topic is reintroduced as the primary subject matter of chap. 18 (i.e., "Presuppositionalism and Verification"). Once again, an accurate critique introduces their discussion: "Verification is the hallmark of evidentialism and the antithesis of presuppositionalism. One tradition says that seeing is believing; the other, believing is seeing" (p. 304). Almost every other construct of presuppositionalism's stance in this chapter is accurate (cf., e.g., the conclusions relating to Bahnsen on p. 309); however, the authors will have nothing to do with presuppositionalism's scripturally corroborated reservations concerning evidences. In actuality, Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley are at times much more devoted to apriorism than most presuppositionalists. This becomes obvious when they make sensationalistic comments such as this: "We agree with the inerrancy doctrine of Van Til and Notaro, but we have more respect for the *augmentation effort* of Pinnock, Jack Rogers, and Barth, despite their *unsound reasoning*. The presuppositionalists arrive at a sound conclusion by a wrong method, the others, at an unsound conclusion by a right method" (p. 307). It has already been suggested that such axiopicistic preoccupations have characterized contemporary departures from orthodox bibliography.

Chap. 19 (i.e., "Analogical Thinking") is a generally commendable evaluation of Van Tillian epistemological transcendence. Many incontestable evaluations surface; for example, "if God can say that finite knowledge is knowledge, then Van Til can never say that finite knowledge is not knowledge" (p. 315).

Also found in this brief chapter is the first disclaimer that Van Til came out of the same mold of epistemological nihilism as Kant (p. 313).

The volume concludes (i.e., chap. 20) with severe criticisms of "Circular Reasoning." Their *modus operandi* does not change in this last chapter (e.g., commencing with a section on "Reasoning in the Reformed Tradition"). However, their opening evaluation of presuppositionalism is not as credible as some of the previous ones: "In all systems of thought except presuppositionalism circular reasoning is considered demonstrative evidence of error. In presuppositionalism, instead of being a vicious circle, it is a sign of intellectual virtue" (p. 318). Their first sentence is suspect because many logicians obviously acknowledge the 'necessary evil' of commencing with nonverifiable assumptions, and for them it does not necessitate the presence of logical error. The second sentence needs to be amended in order to make it an acceptable assessment; it would be more accurate if the words "a sign of *intellectual* virtue" were changed to "a sign of *theological* virtue."

To the authors the unpardonable sin of presuppositionalists in this most crucial area is *petitio principii*: "With respect to the existence of God and the authority of the Bible, presuppositionalists frankly admit to the use of circular reasoning in precisely this sense" (p. 322). But the authors are just as guilty, although they vigorously but futilely strain to deny it (e.g., p. 323). In a section on "Rushdoony on Circular Reasoning" there is a statement which boomerangs on the authors, indicating that it is really Warfield's emperor who has no clothes (contra their accusation directed at presuppositionalists, p. 338):

As soon as the reason realizes that there is a God, it immediately yields itself to that God, and honors Him as the author of itself, unless the reasoner has a vested interest in suppressing this information, *as sinful people do have*. We are not arguing whether this approach of Warfield and the others is successful or not. We know that Rushdoony and others do not think that it is. We believe that they are wrong. We believe that Warfield is right (p. 327, italics added).

After having refused to accept the awesome hamartiological implications of a biblically exposed autonomy, the authors ultimately have proved themselves to be more fideistic than most presuppositionalists when it comes to their own system. Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley's whole system deviates at this crucial hamartiological juncture as is evident in their concluding appeal to Henry's appraisal. He and they assert that "presuppositionalist theology . . . 'exaggerates the noetic consequences of the fall of man'" (p. 337). Unfortunately, it is they who have *minimized* these consequences!

BOOK REVIEWS

Exegetical Fallacies, by D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984. Pp. 153. \$7.95.

The latest effort from the prolific pen of D. A. Carson of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School would seem destined to become required reading in seminary hermeneutics classes. It is essential reading for the pastor-exegete. *Exegetical Fallacies* is a searching and revealing examination of the misuse of various exegetical and hermeneutical principles. Carson states that the book "focuses on the practitioner" (p. 22). Under four major headings (Word Study Fallacies, Grammatical Fallacies, Logical Fallacies, and Presuppositional and Historical Fallacies) he explodes forty-eight different myths regarding "proper exegesis" and then adds an additional six in the concluding chapter. A study like this can be intimidating (Carson acknowledges this in his lengthy introduction), but honest exegetes should consider each of Carson's warnings and should heed most of them.

Carson's treatment of the various fallacies is not always evenhanded. One cause of this may have been the pressure of deadlines (p. 10). Some of the "exploded fallacies" receive thorough exploration and adequate corrective explanation. In other cases, a problem is simply noted but little or no solution is offered. One example of this can be found in Carson's discussion of "Improperly Handled Syllogisms," in which he cites examples of how bad logic can lead to incorrect conclusions, especially in the areas of culturally limited teaching. After exposing the problem, he states, "I believe there are some guidelines that can help us distinguish between the range of applicability . . . ; but I had better not embark on that sort of discussion here" (p. 82). It serves little purpose to expose an error if not even a hint of the correct approach to the problem is given. Again, he speaks of R. C. Trench's *Synonyms of the New Testament* as lacking legitimate basis in linguistics, but does not explain how this is so (p. 54). Finally, he mentions a misapplication of the Granville-Sharp rule by critical scholars (p. 85) but gives no bibliographical information about further discussion of the problem.

These examples of insufficient treatment are balanced by a few instances of overkill. Carson takes Charles Smith to task in regard to Smith's article on "Errant Aorist Interpreters," (*GTJ* 2 [1981] 205-26). He chides Smith for being "linguistically naive" (p. 73) and for "throwing the baby out with the bath water" (p. 74). Yet Carson's conclusion seems to be exactly what Smith attempts to say in his article. The tense of the aorist makes no determination at all about the sense of its use. Rather, it is solely a contextual determination.

Two other shortcomings can be mentioned. Several terms, such as "excluded middle" (pp. 94, 107) and "components of meaning," "referential meaning," and "synonymy" (pp. 48-54) are used with no explanation of their meanings. This assumes acquaintance with these terms and their significance which may be beyond many readers. This points out the necessity of previous

hermeneutical training as a prerequisite for an adequate comprehension of this book. Finally, there are two misspelled Hebrew words (pp. 28–29).

Leaving the shortcomings and advancing to the strengths of the book, many things could be said. A few examples will suffice: Carson stresses the important concept of “distantiation” (pp. 20ff., 106), which necessitates the efforts of the exegete to fill the cultural gap between first century Palestine and twentieth century America. He explodes the theory that the Hebrew language somehow restricted Hebrew thought while Greek allowed a freedom of expression not available in the Hebrew language (pp. 44–45). He refutes the propensity of exegetes to assign “technical term” status to theologically important words (p. 47). He discusses the “one meaning for a text” principle and uses a personal illustration to contrast this with the intuitive “the Lord showed me” approach to interpretation (p. 13). Carson provides insight into the usefulness of diachronic word studies (p. 53) but also shows the fallacy of certain types of etymological studies. By relying heavily upon Barr’s *The Semantics of Biblical Language* and Silva’s *Biblical Words and their Meanings*, he shows the futility of “illegitimate totality transfer” under the headings of “semantic anachronism” and “semantic obsolescence” (pp. 32–36).

Exegetical Fallacies should be a required textbook for seminary hermeneutics classes. The questions Carson has raised about long-cherished methods could be explored more fully in a sequel. Carson has opened Pandora’s box and much discussion should ensue. *Exegetical Fallacies* is well written, easy to read and thought provoking. It is highly recommended to all who truly desire to handle accurately the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15).

JEFF GUIMONT

GRACE BRETHERN CHURCH, FLORA, IN

The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation, by Hans K. LaRondelle. Andrews University Monographs, Studies in Religion, Volume 13. Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1983. Pp. xiv + 226. \$9.95. Paper.

The author of this major critique of dispensationalism is professor of theology at Andrews University Theological Seminary (Th.D., Reformed Free University, Amsterdam). Though the book contains serious misconceptions and other weaknesses, it scores several direct hits upon inarticulate dispensationalists. Accordingly, dispensationalists should take note of this fervent polemic for the Church as the fulfillment of the OT promises to Israel.

The twelve major chapters address such themes as the Christocentric focus of the Bible; the NT as the key to the OT; literal, typological, and allegorical interpretation; the Church as the continuation of the remnant of Israel; Romans 9–11 and other problematic texts; the 70 weeks of Daniel; and the future tribulation for the Church. The book is produced well, with such helpful features as a glossary, lists of abbreviations, bibliography, and index of biblical references. Only a few minor typographical errors occur (perhaps it should be mentioned that *Congressional Quarterly* [p. 57, n. 29] should be *Congregational Quarterly*; also *Concordia* [p. 78, n. 5] should be *Concordia Theological Monthly*).

Among the weaknesses of the book is the repeated equivocation on such crucial hermeneutical terms as interpretation, reinterpretation, application, typological interpretation, typological application, spiritualization, meaning, fuller meaning, significance, christological interpretation, and ecclesiological application. Though the author realizes the need to employ theological terms precisely (p. 23), he does not maintain a valid distinction between meaning and significance (as articulated by E. D. Hirsch and popularized in evangelical circles by W. C. Kaiser). This problem was highlighted in the dialogue between G. E. Ladd and H. A. Hoyt in *The Meaning of the Millennium* (InterVarsity, 1977). What Ladd called "reinterpretation" Hoyt viewed as "application." There is a profound difference here because "reinterpretation" implies a change of the original meaning while "application" implies a new significance of an unchanged original meaning. The ramifications of all this for the Israel/Church distinction and the relationship of the NT to the OT are obvious. Additional hermeneutical difficulties are caused by LaRondelle's mixture of polemics and hermeneutics and his apparent view that the NT uniformly approaches the OT and thus intends to *teach* a uniform hermeneutical system (see W. Van Gemeren, *WTJ* 47 [1985] 112).

Another major problem with the book is its misrepresentations of dispensationalism. The author repeatedly cites the views of *individual* dispensationalists and then states that dispensationalism as a whole holds these views. The *Scofield Reference Bible* (p. 29) and the *New Scofield Reference Bible* (p. 156) are described as representing the "official dispensational position." Though these two publications are probably unsurpassed in popularizing dispensationalism, nevertheless it should be recognized that no universally acknowledged "official" dispensational position exists. Further, responsible dispensationalists do not teach that the future salvation of Israel will be accomplished by political events apart from faith, as the author implies (pp. ix, 128–29, 162; cf. similarly A. Hanson, *ExpTim* 95 [1985] 283). Most dispensationalists today do not believe that they are "forced to project two different new covenants into one and the same prophecy of Scripture" (p. 117). Nor do dispensationalists base their system upon the assumption that "prophecy is nothing but history ahead of time" (p. 141). Nor do credible dispensationalists teach that the Church is "a solution for an emergency situation" (p. 113). Many dispensationalists do not hold to a separate "Palestinian Covenant" (p. 135). In his discussion of Gal 6:16 LaRondelle asserts that the view that "the Israel of God" describes Jewish Christians, not the whole Church, is "dispensational exegesis" (pp. 108–11). However, E. D. Burton (*Galatians*, ICC, p. 358) and many other nondispensationalists hold this view. Other problems in this area could be mentioned but these examples suffice to show that LaRondelle's argument is plagued by hasty generalizations (cf. John Paulien, *AUSS* 22 [1984] 375).

As mentioned before, however, LaRondelle does manage to show the untenability of certain arguments by individual dispensationalists. Here dispensationalists can take heed and profit from the book. Among his most important criticisms is the exposé of the inconsistent literalism of some dispensationalists, notably C. I. Scofield, who permit the allegorizing of narrative while insisting that prophecy be taken literally (pp. 28–31). Similarly,

LaRondelle is correct that dispensationalists have largely ignored the NT application of OT principles to the Church (pp. 48–52). Another telling section titled “The Unity of Biblical Eschatology” (pp. 138–40) concludes that “basically one eschatology binds Israel and the Church together.” Dispensationalists do need to deal more carefully with the one olive tree of Romans 11 and the one spiritual temple of Ephesians 2 (p. 210).

However, I believe that dispensationalism has the best tools to articulate properly this biblical unity. In LaRondelle’s approach Israel seems to coalesce into the Church’s olive tree. Similarly, Israel seems to be estranged from the Church’s covenants of promise. If I read Paul correctly, however, LaRondelle has reversed the biblical priority. It is the Church which by sovereign grace partakes of Israel’s covenants, and it is the Church which is mercifully grafted contrary to nature into the Israelite olive tree. And, as even LaRondelle acknowledges (pp. 126–27), God is able to graft Israel back in again. Thus the difference between LaRondelle and dispensationalism is really not the essential continuity of Israel and the Church. Both LaRondelle and dispensationalists have ways of articulating this biblical truth (though dispensationalists have often minimized it). Rather the difference centers upon the meaning and significance of God’s original covenant promises to his people in the OT. Dispensationalists do not believe that the Church’s sharing in the blessings of these covenants exhausts their fulfillment. Rather the original promise of God to His people Israel will still be fulfilled upon the earth.

This of course brings us again to hermeneutics. LaRondelle claims that his approach follows “the inductive principle of the *analogy of Scripture*” (p. 3). He views exegesis as applying the principles of hermeneutics (p. 7). He believes that the immediate context is important in doing exegesis, both in historical reconstruction (p. 2) and in determining word meanings (pp. 124–25). However, it seems to me that LaRondelle’s “NT reinterprets OT” hermeneutic vitiates the priority of the *immediate* context. His approach is not totally inductive because he leaps too quickly to the remote context of the NT when interpreting the OT. He assumes too readily that NT application of OT truths to the Church renders void the OT promises to national Israel. Here it seems evident that the inevitable circularity of theological systems has overcome LaRondelle’s hoped-for inductivity. The organic unity of Scripture, so important in W. C. Kaiser’s “analogy of *antecedent* scripture” approach, is too readily explained by a *sensus plenior* in which the plain meaning of the OT is “reinterpreted” (changed) by the NT. In my view, this is not the way to articulate the genuine progress of revelation found in Scripture.

To conclude, though LaRondelle may misrepresent dispensationalism at times, he does call upon dispensationalism to articulate accurately the unity of the Bible. Dispensationalists should ignore the misrepresentations and focus upon the central issue of the continuity of Scripture which LaRondelle ably emphasizes. Hopefully, dispensational responses will be somewhat less polemical in spirit. I have spoken more fully to some of these issues in “The Continuity of Scripture and Eschatology: Key Hermeneutical Issues” *GTJ* 6 (1985) 275–87.

Psalms 101–150, by Leslie C. Allen. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word Books, 1983. Pp. xx + 342. \$18.95.

The third and the final volume on the Psalms in the Word Biblical Commentary comes from the pen of a capable OT professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. The format of the commentary follows the standard for this series except that Allen includes his notes and comments under one heading. The commentary displays the series' usual high commitment to contemporary scholarship. Allen has provided not only extensive bibliographies for the Psalms in general but has interacted well with his sources.

A positive aspect of the commentary is that the author regularly discusses the uses of given Psalms in the NT. Dispensationalists may not always be pleased with the result, however. For example in the case of Psalm 105, Allen remarks,

Unlike Judaism, Christianity turns its back upon a geographically and politically localized promise. The motif of the land is generally superseded, in the NT, apart perhaps from Luke 21:24. Christ is the inheritance: kinship in the land is replaced by fellowship in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:18). The Letter to the Hebrews seeks to justify this Christian shift in theological emphasis since it transcends the older hope with a new dimension. The promise to Abraham was not exhausted by Israel's temporal occupation of the land. Canaan was a shadow of the reality, which is a heavenly country destined to be the final home of God's people of the covenants old and new (Heb. 3:7–4:1; 11:13–16, 39, 40) [p. 44].

Likewise, many may disapprove of his handling of traditionally Messianic psalms, such as Psalm 102 "which the NT takes up and transmutes" (p. 16). Another case is Psalm 110 which Allen takes as written on the occasion of David's capture of Jerusalem and accession to the Jebusite throne (p. 86), but which "broaches themes which powerfully overshadow the Israelite king and enfold him in their massive embrace" (p. 87), so that ultimately the psalm became fully applied by Jesus (and the apostles) to his messianic mission. Similarly, Psalm 118 "like other royal psalms . . . came to be imbued with messianic import" (p. 125).

Allen calls the reader's attention to the general introduction found in the first volume written by P. C. Craigie (see the review in *GTJ* 5 [1984] 292–94), and, accordingly, contributes only a short section dealing with the chronological arrangement of Psalms 101–50. However, his suggestions as to the thematic order of the Psalms are extremely helpful. Thus, the position of Psalm 101 seems to be a random selection in order, but Psalm 102 appears close to Psalms 95–100 because it shares with them "the common motif of Yahweh's rule" (p. xx). Psalms 103 and 104, with their identical beginnings, anticipate the hymnic character of Psalms 105–7. Building upon them is a Davidic collection, Psalms 108–10, which in turn is followed by two groups of praise psalms, Psalms 111–12, and 113–18. All of the above were apparently climaxed by a psalm speaking of the Torah, Psalm 119. The Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120–34) are given special attention by Allen in an excursus that "investigates the nature and purpose of this collection" (p. xix; cf. pp. 219–21). Psalms 135–37 appear to be a supplement to the Songs of Ascents, and Psalms 138–45 are considered to be a short Davidic corpus.

Psalms 146–50 are placed last to bring the Psalter to a close with praise to Yahweh, the last of which “appears to serve as a doxology to the fifth book of the Psalter (Pss 107–50) and to the Psalter as a whole” (p. xix).

Each psalm is given critical attention. Allen’s notes/comments sections are detailed investigations of the problems relative to the text. Allen’s discussions of form, structure, and setting show him at his best, as he wrestles with the problems of literary analysis. Both sections are followed by a discussion called “Explanation,” an interpretation of the text with application to or anticipation of NT revelation. A very detailed “Index of Biblical Texts” (including the OT, Apocrypha, Qumran, and the NT) closes the book.

It is evident that Allen’s work is a serious contribution to biblical studies. One may at times find fault with Allen’s translation and the critical points of Hebrew grammar behind it (e.g., his emendation of the text of Psalm 118:13 rather than dealing with the problem as a simple matter of enallage). One may tire of his preoccupation with literary sources and his attention to minute details relative to literary considerations (e.g., Psalm 132, pp. 204–9). One may disagree occasionally with Allen’s interpretations (e.g., his commitment to a “Deuteronomic” tradition and his late dating of Joel, pp. 52–53). Nevertheless, Allen must be credited for his careful scholarship. Serious OT students will welcome his work as a valuable reference tool.

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The Forms of Old Testament Literature. Vol. 1, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature*, by George W. Coats. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. 322. \$21.95. Paper.

Under the editorship of Rolf Knierim and Gene M. Tucker, Eerdmans has undertaken a most ambitious project, the form-critical analysis of each unit in every book of the OT. The volumes will follow a format which examines the structure, genre, setting, and intention of each pericope, and includes a bibliography. George W. Coats, Professor of OT at Lexington Theological Seminary, has offered one of the first examples of this new series in his *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature*.

Coats has the well-defined goal of examining each unit in Genesis form critically, a goal which he follows consistently. The commentary deals with relatively few exegetical details. The bibliographies are also oriented toward form criticism. Though Coats does not reproduce the biblical text, he does include outlines of each passage.

One major objective of the FOTL series is “to bring consistency to the terminology for the genres and formulas of the biblical literature.” The commentary begins with a helpful discussion of the various narrative genres and also includes a glossary. Consequently the reader is not left to himself to determine how Coats is using a particular term. Such clarity should be appreciated by all, especially by those who are not conversant with form-critical jargon.

Coats' single-minded devotion to form-critical pursuits is both the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of *Genesis*. Coats endeavors to analyze the form of every passage in Genesis, which is no mean feat! However, Coats labors only to apply form-critical principles to the text. He never seeks to justify the approach. Limits of space and time notwithstanding, somewhere Coats must establish the validity of form criticism to narrative.

Over the past generation a virtual consensus has emerged concerning the fruitfulness of form-critical study of biblical literature which was written in self-contained units, such as Psalms and Proverbs. No such consensus, however, exists today about either the benefit or the propriety of applying form-critical methodology to biblical narrative. Laying aside the question of *who* organized the narrative, the fact is *someone* did. When individual passages are organized to make a point, can or should form criticism be utilized? When a book contains a carefully developed argument, is it advisable to conjecture about the individual components of the work? Admittedly, Coats' work represents a major form-critical study, but is his major premise correct? These searching questions must be answered before Coats' superstructure can be meaningfully examined, much less adopted.

A second criticism revolves around the problem of subjectivity with such an approach. One of the greatest challenges facing form criticism is that of developing an external, scientific control to guide the method. This problem is particularly acute at the levels of isolating and classifying the literary units and determining the setting (*Sitz im Leben*). Unfortunately, these are also the *sine qua non* of form criticism.

A third problem centers around certain pericopes which Coats classifies under nonhistorical genres such as novella, fable, myth, and (perhaps) saga. Coats writes, "The saga reflects, in all probability, the productivity of the storyteller within the structures of ancient society" (p. 6). I find such a dehistoricizing view of biblical traditions indefensible.

GEORGE L. KLEIN

CRISWELL CENTER FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, by F. F. Bruce, NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. Pp. 442. \$18.95. Cloth.

This NICNT volume replaces the earlier one on Ephesians and Colossians by E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce (1957), and the section on Philemon in Jac. J. Müller's volume on Philippians and Philemon (1955). The Colossians portion has been almost completely rewritten by Bruce. The commentaries on Philemon and Ephesians are entirely new.

The introduction to Colossians is considerably enlarged from the earlier commentary. The history of Colosse is sketched in a most readable fashion, and the documentation is extensive from primary sources. The Jewish settlement in the area is also discussed as a background to the distinctive character of the Colossian heresy. It is Bruce's view that the Colossian heresy was basically Jewish. However, "it is not the straightforward Judaizing legalism of Galatians that is envisioned in Colossians, but a form of mysticism which

tempted its adepts to look on themselves as a spiritual elite" (p. 22). He goes on to say:

To look to movements within Judaism for the sources of the Colossian heresy is a wiser procedure than to postulate direct influences from Iranian or Greek culture. . . . And not only in Jewish non-conformity but in what was destined to establish itself as normative Judaism there was present, as early as the first century B.C., a form of religious mysticism which was to endure for centuries [p. 23].

Bruce calls the reader's attention to *merkabah* mysticism, a Jewish phenomenon which emphasized punctilious observance of the minutiae of the law so as to gain entry to the vision of the heavenly chariot (*merkābāh*) as in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek 1:15-26). He admits that it "cannot be proved that the Colossian heresy involved an early form of *merkabah* mysticism, but the heavenly ascent implied in Col. 2:18 appears to have been of the same character as the experience which the *merkabah* mystics sought" (p. 26).

Those familiar with Bruce's NT commentaries will find few surprises in this one. The outline of Colossians has been modified slightly from the earlier work, but it is still basically the same. An occasional "Britishism" may mystify the American reader. For example, "don't let anyone talk you round with plausible arguments" (p. 92). He translates Col 2:18 as "through delight in 'humility'" and calls it a Septuagintalism, and thus finds no need to emend the text as some have proposed (pp. 117-18). One amusing footnote in the earlier commentary has been omitted in this one, where Bruce said of J. R. Harris that for him "there was nothing more certain in life than a good conjectural emendation" (p. 249 of Simpson and Bruce commentary).

The commentary on Philemon is rich with background data but does not lose the charm of the letter with too much technical explanation. In the introduction Bruce notes that very little is known about the presence of Onesimus with Paul. To argue that he was a runaway slave is going beyond hard evidence. It is possible that he had been sent to Rome on business for Philemon, and had overstayed his leave, thus needing a letter from Paul for his extended absence (p. 197).

Bruce thinks that Paul was requesting Philemon to receive Onesimus back on a new footing, and is also delicately letting him know that he would really like Philemon to send Onesimus back to Paul to continue the personal service he had begun (p. 199). Bruce also thinks that Paul assumed that Philemon would take legal steps to change the master-slave relationship and set Onesimus free (p. 217). It was not clear to this reviewer how this last assumption fits his conclusion that Paul was hinting to Philemon to send Onesimus back to Paul. If Onesimus were freed, Philemon would no longer be in a position to send him.

It is also of interest that Bruce opts for the translation "ambassador" instead of "old man" in Phlm 9. He argues that this involves no conjectural emendation because during that period both words, or at least the two spellings, were practically interchangeable. It is not disputed that both spellings can be found for these words, but it is not as convincing to everyone as it is to Bruce that the context favors "ambassador." One could argue that Paul's calling himself an ambassador would place his request on the official level which he was trying so carefully to avoid.

The commentary on Ephesians is an entirely new work, distinct from Bruce's 1961 publication of an exposition of this epistle. It is a careful exegetical study, rich in documentation and lucid in exposition. Bruce prefers to think that Ephesians is an encyclical written to Gentile Christians in the province of Asia who needed to be shown what was involved in their recent commitment to the way of Christ. He believes that the readers were not known personally to Paul.

The neuter "and this" (Eph 2:8) is interpreted as referring to salvation as a whole, not excluding the faith by which it is received. "The foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph 2:20) is explained as the foundation consisting of the apostles and prophets, rather than the foundation laid by them. Bruce suggests that the apostles and prophets might well be viewed as the first stone to be laid in the new building. In discussing the difficult use of Psalms 68:19 in Eph 4:8, Bruce gives a careful analysis of the textual problem, with particular attention to the targumic rendering which is similar to Paul's use. The section in Eph 4:8-9 is regarded as a *peshet*, after the pattern of the biblical commentaries from Qumran. The well-known command, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18) is explained as a reference to the Holy Spirit rather than to the human spirit of the believer, in view of the other three uses of the phrase "in Spirit" in this epistle, all of which certainly refer to the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph 2:22; 3:5; and 6:18).

This commentary is a worthy example of F. F. Bruce's careful scholarship and is highly recommended to the serious student of these epistles. It is the sort of reference work that will be consulted again and again.

HOMER A. KENT, JR.

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Style and Discourse, With Special Reference to the Text of the Greek New Testament, by E. A. Nida, J. P. Louw, A. H. Snyman and J. V. W. Cronje. New York: United Bible Societies, 1983. Pp. 199. \$5.95. Paper.

Linguistics is a relatively new field, a product of the "humanistic sciences" (if such a term may be permitted!). Efforts to relate linguistic knowledge to the biblical text are newer still. In the last two or three decades, however, there have been a number of signs of increasing interaction between linguists and biblical studies. Originally a purely scientific endeavor, linguistics has come into its own as one of the central concerns of biblical scholarship, both here and abroad. This is evidenced by the constantly growing literature in the field (for a progress report, see D. A. Black, *Linguistics, Biblical Semantics, and Biblical Translation: An Annotated Bibliography of Periodical Literature from 1961* [Talbot Bibliography 2; La Mirada, CA: Biola University, 1984]).

One aspect of the contribution which modern linguistics is making to the discipline of biblical studies is a renewed appreciation of the importance of semiotics—the study of the stylistic, rhetorical, and symbolic level of language. Thinking of meaning only in terms of lexical or syntactic items can easily lead to a disregarding of the crucial role of rhetorical features as signs. Recent treatments of rhetorical criticism have helped biblical scholars to recognize

the significance of style as an important component in any theory and practice of biblical interpretation.

It is in an effort to draw the attention of the NT student to the rhetorical dimension of the Greek NT that the present book is offered. The writers are not advocating any single approach to semiotics, nor do they necessarily endorse everything published in the field of Greek rhetoric. Their purpose here is to present the most widely accepted functions and features of rhetoric and style in a manner that will enable the beginning student to understand and use them in his or her study of the NT. They are convinced that Greek studies and particularly NT Greek studies need to be reexamined in the light of these new insights. They have sought to provide a comprehensive system into which the various functions of style and rhetoric may be fitted.

The book's eleven chapters can be divided into two sections. Chaps. 1-5 discuss stylistic formulations and their basic function in the discourse structure of the Greek NT. Here the reader will find a convincing argument for the necessity of studying semiotics as a method of biblical research; an overview of the forty or so rhetorical features found in the Greek NT (e.g., *anacolutha*, *litotes*, *hyperbole*, *metonymy*), and a thorough discussion of the functional significance of rhetorical signs in their operation at various levels of language.

In chaps. 6-11 the authors apply their research to the analysis of several NT pericopes, including John 1:1-5; James 1:2-8; Heb 1:1-4; Eph 1:13-14; Rom 2:1-11; and Luke 15:11-32. For easy reference, an appendix classifies all the figures of speech found in the NT according to three basic principles: repetition, omission, and shifts in expectancies. Each classification is provided with at least one example from the Greek NT.

The strengths of this book are many. The authors have set forth a strong rationale for the study of semiotics in the Greek NT. After reading the book I was convinced that the study of style and rhetoric can contribute a great deal to our understanding of the NT. It can help us become more aware of *why* we understand a text the way we do when we read it, and it can help us talk about the text more precisely, by providing us with a methodology through which we can show how our interpretation is in part derived from its rhetorical structure. Semiotics may also help us solve problems of interpretation by showing in rigorous ways why one meaning is possible but not another. Above all, however, semiotics can give us a point of view, a way of looking at a text that will help to develop a consistent analysis, and prompt us to ask questions about the language of the text that might otherwise be overlooked.

Other than a few spelling errors, I found no major weaknesses in the book. It is worth the price for the appendix of NT figures of speech alone. The book is suitable for use in every university and seminary where Greek is taught. It is organized in such a way that it could serve as an introductory text in a one-semester course in rhetoric or as a handbook in intermediate level Greek courses. It is must reading for students preparing for translating careers. It succeeds well in presenting its subject in a most readable and profitable manner.

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The Majesty of Man: The Dignity of Being Human, by Ronald B. Allen. Portland: Multnomah, 1984. Pp. 221. \$11.95.

As another in Multnomah's "Critical Concern" series, this book discusses an issue of concern for American readers. The subject of man has become a central focus of much writing today under the influence of burgeoning research in the field of psychology. This book seeks to establish a biblical context for anthropology rather than a context of secular humanism which has had a profound impact on American thought about man.

However, the book was something of a disappointment. Although Allen says that anthropology is "the burning issue of the day" and that "the very survival of the species may hinge on our answers," his answers to such diverse issues as racism, sexism, feminism, government and education, evolutionary hypotheses, the lack of expository preaching, and the interpretation of Gen 3:16 lack depth. Rather than finding a critical study of these issues one is distracted by illustrations, asides, and peripheral issues.

Nevertheless, I do not wish to disagree with the overall design of the book. The rise and influence of secular humanism in modern America is described well. The three divisions of the book, "The Mystery of Man," "The Majesty of Man," and "The Mandate for Man," are appropriate. And I endorse Allen's underlying desire to motivate believers to proper standards of conduct. As Allen says, "When man is what he ought to be as male and female, then man brings new majesty to Yahweh his maker" (p. 199).

The thesis of this book is that there must be a reaffirmation of the biblical dignity of man in this dreadful age of assault upon humanity (p. 13). For Allen, man's dignity is a subset of God's dignity, as he expressed in his discussion of Psalm 8: "man may be praised in the context of the praise of God" (p. 69).

However, Allen's treatment of Psalm 8 is not totally satisfactory. He states that the central picture of Psalm 8 is the praise of man (p. 69). But the very next sentence is that which was quoted above, namely, "man may be praised in the context of the praise of God." He calls this the startling teaching of Psalm 8 (p. 69), a text the audacity of which will not go away (p. 71). But is man in fact being praised? The introduction and conclusion of the psalm use exactly the same words in praise to God (vv 1, 8; Allen calls this the frame of the psalm, p. 68). Man, however, is not praised. Allen remarks, "When I think of the universe and then think of myself, I must be truly humbled" (p. 69). That was the psalmist's reaction as well. Man, faced with the magnitude and splendor of God's creation can only be gripped by his own insignificance and frailty. The structure and thrust of Psalm 8 dictates that the question "What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him?" (v 4a, *NASB*) must be answered along these lines: "In myself I am nothing, yet by God's act and grace I have been made a member of a race he has set up as the vice-regent of his creation. Thus I cannot but praise him." Man stands not in awe of himself but in awe of God. To acknowledge that man is of immense importance to God and that man is God's greatest work leads, as the psalmist has shown, to the praise and glory of God alone.

Furthermore, what individual man, when confronted with the awfulness of his sin and depravity, dares to exclaim himself majestic? Allen speaks of the paradox between the great depth of sin and the great worth of man. I prefer, however, to see the paradox as being between the awfulness of sin and the awesomeness of the *imago dei*.

Another key point in Allen's discussion relates to the title Jesus gave to himself, namely, "the Son of Man." Allen refers this to Jesus' identification with humanity as it ought to be: royal, wonderful, and majestic (p. 124). Allen then construes this title as bespeaking the high value and worth of man (pp. 63, 108). However, others understand this title as pointing to Jesus' heavenly origin, his possession of heavenly glory, and his suffering for men (cf. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971] 172; and Charles Ryrie, *Biblical Theology of NT* [Chicago: Moody, 1970] 51).

Secular humanism elevates man's concept of himself. Allen sees a biblical anthropology as teaching a paradox between the great depth of sin and the great worth of man. I believe, however, that the emphasis of Scripture focuses on the greatness of God, as expressed in the central theme of Psalm 8: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"

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The Case for Christianity, by Colin Chapman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. 315. \$12.95. Paper.

Originally published in hardcover, *The Case for Christianity* has now been released in a paperback edition. This book is a cross between a history of philosophical ideas and an apologetics text. It features a handbook-style anthology with over one thousand quotations from a wide variety of sources and well over one hundred drawings and photographs (both color and black-and-white).

The text is arranged in seven major sections which are subdivided into almost forty smaller sections. It begins with a discussion of ten of mankind's most basic questions concerning such topics as meaning, values, truth, love, suffering, evil, and death (sec. 1). Then there is a logical progression from a statement of Christian answers to these questions (2) and Christian beliefs (3), to how these beliefs may be tested (4), to a comparison of them with other systems of thought (5), and then to a defense of Christianity (6). This book closes with an appeal to the reader to trust Jesus Christ and the Christian world view set forth in Scripture.

Chapman's volume has several positive qualities. Few books on the market in this general field exhibit the variety of topics that this one does, ranging from crucial questions to a comparative study of major religions and from philosophical world views to apologetics. Another feature, and perhaps

the strongest, is the emphasis on studying ideas. Quotations, often from world-renowned scholars, set the stage for the exploration of major concepts in both Eastern and Western thought.

The different sections are of varying quality, but are usually well done. For example, the questions raised in section one are not only of obvious importance (even in terms of life and death), but are stated in such a way that one can existentially relate to the problems themselves. Sec. 4, which is concerned with the criteria for testing beliefs, is also well done. The conclusion is that Christianity is, in principle, testable in the same general way as is history (pp. 112–13), philosophy (p. 118), and even science (pp. 121–23). However, the last part of sec. 4 (concerning the “test case” of creation versus evolution) makes some good points but is rather indecisive. Sec. 5, measuring almost one-third of the entire book, is an information-packed division which briefly discusses five world religions, ten major philosophers and ten philosophies.

Another positive point concerns the readability of the book. While the ideas are lofty, the language is quite comprehensible.

A few concerns also need to be noted. Although the sections are generally strong, a few areas need strengthening. The relative indecisiveness of the creation versus evolution test case was just mentioned. A more important example concerns sec. 6, which in a certain sense is the heart of the book. While featuring a major apologetic for Christianity, it is probably also the weakest portion of the text. It is not so much that the arguments are poor, but that the various points generally need strengthening against more rigorous forms of each objection. As an example, the portion on the reliability of the NT is only three pages long (pp. 234–36). Though it never treats the issue of inspiration at all, it later quotes extensively from NT texts. However, general reliability does not insure the nature of the exact words, at least not as Chapman presents the evidence. More argumentation and evidences are needed.

Another major point concerns the presence of so many quotations (over one thousand) in this volume, some of which are fairly long. While they frequently serve a very positive purpose (see above), often they are strung together with little commentary.

Lastly, while this reviewer often found the many pictures attractive, they frequently distracted from the discussion. Additionally, the pictures were often unrelated (or only incidentally related) to the text. Yet, it is certainly realized that such a comment falls into the broad and complex field of aesthetics and that others might disagree at this juncture.

As a whole, my assessment of this book is positive. It is distinctive in its approach and certainly in its colorful format. Its vast range of topics gives it a broad appeal as does its readable language and style. And the development of prominent ideas in both Eastern and Western thought is probably the strongest single feature of this volume. I recommend this book as a good survey text, especially for college classes which attempt a combined treatment of philosophical ideas and apologetics. The many topics even allow much room for the professor to choose selected areas for study.

With regard to the areas of concern noted above, a professor could supplement sec. 6 (or any other portion) with additional material. With regard to the need for more discussion, this could also be supplemented by class notes and lectures. In fact, both of these procedures are recommended by this reviewer.

With these qualifications, Chapman's volume could serve as a general text for college classes in areas of philosophy or apologetics. It is also broad enough to interest persons who simply like to read and study in these areas.

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Foundations of Evangelical Theology, by John Jefferson Davis. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984. Pp. 282. \$9.95. Paper.

Handbook of Basic Bible Texts, by John Jefferson Davis. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. Pp. 158. \$6.95. Paper.

Theology Primer, by John Jefferson Davis. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981. Pp. 111. \$5.95. Paper.

John Jefferson Davis, assistant professor of Theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, has written three outstanding volumes to assist the student (and professor) in the introduction to the study of theology. Together, the books provide a wealth of information regarding biblical texts, brief commentaries on important passages, extensive bibliography, definition of terms, identification of leading figures in theology (past and present) and a truly fine example of theological method. I am sure that the books will find acceptance in a broad range of theological institutions.

The *Handbook of Basic Bible Texts* provides a complete text of key passages which form the foundation for the study of particular theological topics. Davis gives the key passages offered by proponents of various views where there are genuine differences of opinion among evangelicals. At places there is a brief commentary on the positions and references to theologians supporting the disputed points. The translation which he uses for Scripture references is the *NIV* (showing the wide acceptance that this version is receiving among evangelicals). Each section closes with a brief listing of books for further study. The beginning student will find this little volume invaluable in working through the issues in systematic theology.

A second volume, the *Theology Primer*, complements the *Handbook*. New students in theology sometimes sit under a professor who surveys the history of various views and demonstrates strengths and weaknesses of each. Such students may feel completely overwhelmed with the amount of literature, the new and difficult terms, and the names of numerous theologians who advocate certain positions. This book is mandatory for such students. As the author says, "it will help the student find his or her way around the theological landscape."

The volume discusses thirty-two major theologians, contemporary ones such as Henry, Packer, and Pannenberg and those of the past such as Schleiermacher, Harnack, Hodge, and Warfield. The diversity of positions represented is obvious from this small sampling. Theological terms such as "personal and propositional revelation" and philosophical positions of truth and language are surveyed. The introductory chapter is a brief, but helpful guide to theological research. The book concludes with a detailed bibliography on each major topic in systematics. One could easily "get picky" concerning the choices that the author made concerning terms, theologians and books. If so, there is ample room for another similar volume discussing issues and people from different denominations and theological traditions. Davis's own reformed-evangelical position is evident as one moves through the pages of the volume. For those with more Baptist, Wesleyan, or Dispensational leanings, different selections may be desired. Yet, without question, the book is a genuine contribution to theological introduction.

The third volume, *Foundations of Evangelical Theology*, is a marvelous text on the theological method. The author surveys the evangelical movement in America in order to pinpoint the audience for which he desires to do theology. This audience is those who walk a middle position between modernity on the "left" and fundamentalism on the "right." His understanding of American evangelicalism echoes many of the optimistic insights in previous volumes on this subject by Donald Bloesch. The following chapters include discussion of divine revelation, the place of reason, the role of religious experience, tradition, and Scripture and hermeneutics.

The chapter focusing on divine revelation offers a nice discussion of the usual distinctions between general and special revelation. He is quick to point out that the revelation of God is not merely for "the saving of souls," but is a world changing word from God. The personal, corporate, and societal implications of the gospel are detailed from a Reformed perspective. Revelation assumes the leading place in his thought. Reason is a servant to revelation and must be transformed by that revelation because reason itself is sinful and needs redeeming. For Davis, echoing Van Til, there is a profound difference between sinful and redeemed reason. This gap makes a major difference in the way one approaches psychology, sociology, political science, economics and other major disciplines. As evangelicals become more prominent in American society, they must remember the vast difference that exists between Christian and non-Christian approaches to these subjects.

The chapter on religious experience may prove to be provocative, although Davis is certainly quite cautious in his statements. He suggests the possibility for continuous experiential revelations alongside the written word of God. While affirming the priority of Scripture, Davis leaves somewhat ambiguous how these experiences are to be interpreted. Even though E. Y. Mullins based a theology on experience and wrote the articles on "experience" in the *The Fundamentals*, it seems apparent that Davis is unaware of Mullins's valuable contribution to this subject. There is a two page bibliography following the section on experience, but Mullins's name is absent.

The chapter on tradition is in my opinion the finest contribution of the book. For one who does theology by doing biblical theology in light of

tradition (as apparently is the method of the author), this chapter will prove quite valuable. Davis includes the early fathers, the Ecumenical synods, the reformers, and contemporary proponents in the survey. Included is a fine analysis of recent contributions to Roman Catholic tradition such as the immaculate conception, papal infallibility, and other issues. The priority of Scripture is the basis for the rejection of these positions.

The concluding chapters on Scripture and hermeneutics are useful and insightful. Davis affirms verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of the Bible. His discussion of what could be considered error in light of the biblical standards of truth and accuracy is valuable. The hermeneutic umbrella for Davis includes an inerrant text, one harmonious message in the Bible, and one God as the ultimate author of Holy Scripture. One might wish for additional discussion on doctrinal development in the text, progressive revelation, and authorial intent. But that would probably require a book in itself. Traditional dispensationalism comes under the author's criticism. Perhaps more recent approaches to dispensationalism such as Saucy's or Cook's would be more acceptable to him. Davis seems inclined to the "obedience of faith" position of Daniel Fuller as a guide to the understanding of the unity and diversity in the text.

The book is written for American Evangelical theologians, and it should be read by all theologians and students. I am quite sure that this volume will make a major contribution to discussions of method and hermeneutics.

These three volumes, along with a work previously edited by the author, *The Necessity of Systematic Theology*, are quite sufficient for detailed and profitable hours of study in the area of theological prolegomena. I recommend them all.

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CRISWELL CENTER FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

Christian Theology, Vol. 2, by Millard J. Erickson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984. Pp. 455-862. \$19.95.

One can hardly find the words to express appreciation to Millard Erickson for the fine contribution that he has made to evangelical theology. Vol. 2 of *Christian Theology* exceeds the reader's expectations, which were already quite high due to the quality of Vol. 1. Vol. 2 surveys the doctrines of humanity, sin, the person of Christ, and the work of Christ. The work is consistent in its exegesis and interacts with historical and contemporary positions. The methodology that Erickson outlined so well in Vol. 1 is consistently applied in Vol. 2. The true strength of the volume is its concern for the church and its doxological summaries. Good theology should not lead to debate, but to doxology, and Erickson is certainly on target at this point.

Granting these obvious strengths, some will disagree with Erickson's opening chapters concerning creation. While there is genuine wrestling with the biblical and scientific material, it is disappointing that there is little interest

in the young earth position of the Creation Research Society or the Institute for Creation Research. Also, there is no interaction with Bruce Waltke's position (see the five articles in *BSac* 132–33 [1975–76]). Erickson adopts a progressive creationist position similar to that of Davis Young. This of course comes as no surprise since it was previously discussed in Vol. 1. He does conclude with a strong defense of the historicity of the biblical Adam and an excellent summary of the theological meaning of human creation.

His chapter on the "image of God" in men and women is very well written. It includes interaction with the substantive, relational, and functional views followed by a lengthy evaluation of each. His conclusions give evidence of solid exegesis and theological reflection. The ethical implications of this important issue are outlined as a summary for the chapter. The closely related discussion of the "constitutional nature of the human" follows. He demonstrates the weaknesses of the trichotomist position and then honestly evaluates the strengths of the dichotomists and the monists. His conclusion is a conflation of these alternatives which he calls conditional unity. The discussion of the "universality of humanity" is a helpful and insightful chapter focusing on the theological and ethical considerations of the doctrine of humanity. He addresses the issues of racism, sexism, oppression, the aged, the unborn, and the unmarried. The pastor will find much beneficial material at this point.

Erickson offers a lengthy section on the doctrine of sin that includes "the nature of sin," "the source of sin," "the results of sin," "the magnitude of sin," and "the social dimensions of sin." Particularly helpful is his explanation concerning the interrelationship between the doctrine of sin and other doctrines. He sees the results of sin in terms of its negative effects on the sinner and the sinner's relation to others, in addition to the separation of one's relationship with God. The implications for the doctrine of reconciliation are quite apparent. The discussion of the transmission of sin takes into consideration traditional and contemporary options. After examining the issues arising from Romans 5, he opts for a doctrine of imputation calibrated according to the level of responsibility and maturity in one's life, a view with which I am not in complete agreement.

Without question the strength of the book is the latter half, where he focuses on the issues of Christology. With the issues in theology at large centralized at this point, Erickson's work will prove a worthy contribution to future discussions. Unlike contemporary approaches that discuss the work of Christ prior to the person of Christ (in functional or even process models), Erickson surveys the person of Christ and then moves to his work. There are excellent sections on the deity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, and the virgin birth. Included is a nice overview of the kenosis and the corresponding issues concerning the sinlessness of Jesus. His conclusions are orthodox at each point. He is, however, fully aware of the issues in contemporary theology and opts for a fully Chalcedonian model of Jesus' person. Consistent with his previously announced methodology is a concern to retranslate Chalcedon, but certainly not to reinterpret it!

The final area outlining the work of Christ is the zenith of the volume. He presents a biblical interpretation of the work of Christ in relation to the functions of Christ as revealer, reconciler, and ruler (in contrast to the offices

of prophet, priest, and king). Following his model of tracing the historical development of the doctrine, he opts for the penal-substitution theory of Calvin as that which best represents the biblical data. He then points out strengths in the other views for a well-rounded explanation of the atonement. He answers the contemporary objections to this conclusion and lists the implications of this view for the life of the believer. The volume concludes with a well thought out analysis of the long discussed question concerning the extent of the atonement. He opts for a position balanced between Arminianism and Calvinism. A note is included concerning the charismatic concept of healing in the atonement.

The benefits of such a book to the evangelical world are many. It exemplifies honest examination of opposing positions. The theologian is reminded by example to keep the church in the forefront of attention when doing theology. A model based on a strong position of biblical authority is offered, along with the implications of such authority—where the Bible speaks Christians should speak and where the Bible is silent Christians should speak with caution and care. The irenic and doxological tone of the book make it very enjoyable, not to mention the fact that it is very well written. This set (assuming the same standards of excellence are present in Vol. 3) will become standard classroom reading for evangelical seminaries and colleges for decades ahead. Because of his concern for the church, Erickson's volumes should be mandatory reading for pastors as well. The results should be enrichment for the life, witness, and worship of the church.

DAVID S. DOCKERY

CRISWELL CENTER FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

Theological and Religious Reference Materials. Vol. 1, General Resources and Biblical Studies, by G. E. Gorman and Lyn Gorman. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1984. Pp. xvi + 526. \$49.95.

Theological and Religious Reference Materials. Vol. 2, Systematic Theology and Church History, by G. E. Gorman and Lyn Gorman. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1985. Pp. xiv + 401. \$47.50.

Theological students should welcome these first two volumes of annotated bibliography. They will look forward to Vol. 3 (dealing with practical theology and related subjects in the social sciences) and Vol. 4 (on comparative and non-Christian religions). Greenwood Press is to be congratulated for these inaugural volumes in its series, *Bibliographies and Indexes in Religious Studies*.

Vol. 1 contains 2,204 entries arranged into 21 classifications, while Vol. 2 has 1,788 entries in eleven classifications. Each volume contains detailed author, title, and subject indexes. American scholars may find the classification scheme far too broad, although the Australian authors intended it that way, hoping to encourage browsing by the neophyte theologian (Vol. 1, p. xii). Nevertheless, it seems odd that Migne's *Patrologiae Cursus Completus* comprises only two entries out of 452 "handbooks" on Church History. Neither pride of place nor length of annotation distinguishes the 328-volume

Patrologiae from such lesser efforts as a 124-page book on *The Medieval Church*. Confessional or chronological or geographical subheadings in the classification would have been useful.

The citations are arranged alphabetically by author or editor, then by title. This is sometimes awkward, as when a supplement is listed prior to a main title, or even widely separated from it because of a different editor. One wishes that the number of pages had been given for single volume works. This is sometimes useful as a hint at the comprehensiveness of a work in comparison to similar works.

Each entry has a one paragraph annotation that briefly conveys the subject matter and scope of the work. The author's viewpoint, theological stance, and major advantages and deficiencies of the work are occasionally noted. Most annotations are quite positive or at least neutral. Gorman and Gorman are careful to identify supplements, revisions, reprints, and microform editions, and frequently guide the user to newer, better, or more comprehensive works.

The wide range of materials included in these two volumes reflects the broad definition of "reference materials" adopted by the compilers (Vol. 1, p. xi). It is inevitable that errors and omissions will be noted. Premillennial theologians may be annoyed, for example, to find that Chafer's eight-volume *Systematic Theology* is not included among numerous similar works. Anticipating such occurrences, the authors invite comments for use in any future supplementary volumes.

A fine feature of Vol. 1 is the chapter on "Introduction to the Study and Use of Theological Literature," by John B. Trotti, librarian at Union Theological Seminary of Virginia. His essay should provide both guidance and inspiration to the young theological scholar; it is required reading for this reviewer's class in theological research.

Because of their scope and cost these volumes will not likely find a place on many shelves. That place might more appropriately be filled by John A. Bollier's *The Literature of Theology: A Guide for Students and Pastors* (Westminster, 1979), or Robert J. Kepple's *Reference Works for Theological Research: An Annotated Selective Bibliographical Guide* (2d ed.; University Press of America, 1981).

ROBERT IBACH

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism, by Eberhard Jüngel. Translated by Darrell L. Guder. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. 414. \$20.95.

The modern skepticism with regard to the person of God (a situation to which Jüngel refers repeatedly) has arisen because of certain metaphysical developments over the last several hundred years and because of the thorough misunderstanding of the invisibility of God in the world—or, as this work expresses it, that God is in the world as not God—whereby God is the

mystery of the world. In light of the current situation, Eberhard Jüngel uses his well-known constructive theological abilities both to expose the trends and thought forms that have given rise to modern radical unbelief and to give in-depth expression of the biblical identification of God as the Crucified Jesus of Nazareth whereby God is revealed as love.

Jüngel, who is Professor of Philosophy and Theology at the University of Tübingen, was a student of Barth and the Barthian influence is evident throughout much of the book. However, he is far from a mere Barthian mouthpiece. This is seen most clearly in Jüngel's development since his earlier book, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming*. Much of his discussion arises from the nineteenth century insights of both the constructive forms (e.g., Hegel, Schelling, and Schleiermacher) and the more nihilistic forms (e.g., Feuerbach, Marx, and Nietzsche). Out of this and through carefully chosen biblical texts, Jüngel responds to the current situation.

In chap. 1, Jüngel begins reflecting on the problem and embarrassment of talk about God. While theology seeks to make "God" an understandable, significant, and relevant term for the world, it seems that there is no place for God. Jüngel responds to this by rejecting the Western metaphysical tradition which has its basis in Greek philosophy. Rather than thinking of God as absolute, utterly removed from man (and thus finally irrelevant for man) as is true in Greek philosophy, Jüngel insists on the "word of the cross" and a return to a true Christian perspective on God, i.e., God on the cross.

In chap. 2 Jüngel continues his analysis of modern doubt and atheism. The claims of atheism can be rejected rightly only after classical theism (the Western metaphysical tradition) has been rejected. Modern skepticism about God arises not so much from questions about who or whether God is but from questions about the *where* of God and from demands for certainty. Just as Barth criticized theism via the Christian faith itself, so too Jüngel seeks to correct theism in light of the "death of God." Classical theism could not allow death to be attributed to the One above man. Yet the Christian understanding is that in Christ God participated in death. The idea of the "death of God in Christ" is ancient in the church (Jüngel notes this from Tertullian through Luther, although there were various understandings), yet this thought was lost to the church because Greek thought about the absoluteness of God was made the construct by which the Bible was interpreted. Jüngel concludes this chapter by summarizing the christological origin of the phrase "death of God" and its modern recovery by philosophy and theology.

In chap. 3 Jüngel wrestles with the critical impact of the Cartesian *cogito* upon the Western concept of God and the philosophical developments that followed, notably in the varying negations of Fichte, Feuerbach, and Nietzsche. From the problematic line of Western metaphysical thought, Jüngel reformulates the modern understanding of God via negation of a static *ontos* and via an active coming of the divine relating to man via *topos*. The Cartesian *cogito*, while affirming God's existence by methodical doubt, in fact enacted the separation of the essence and existence of God, his existence being actually established by the "I think." Contrary to this Western metaphysical tradition but in keeping with early Christian thought, Jüngel argues that God's deity must be construed in unity with death in Jesus the crucified one and in unity

with self-negation. This is the only real basis whereby the being of God can be adequately thought. Chaps. 4 and 5 give concreteness to this initial expression of Jüngel's very forceful point.

Having established that God in Jesus Christ can be thought, Jüngel moves necessarily and relevantly (in light of continued debate regarding "God-talk") to the speakability of God. One can abuse the name of God by both crudity and by over-refinement. It is this second tendency that Jüngel confronts in chap. 4. Proper talk about God must correspond to God in that it "lets him *come*," i.e., lets him be subject of speaking by being present in the Word. The Christian faith moves from the belief that God has definitely spoken, definitively in the Word of the Cross. Faith is man's necessary response to the event wherein God has spoken and allowed man to participate in the Word. Here God justifies man, and God has allowed himself to be recognized. Yet, in light of this, what is the appropriate way to talk of God? Christian theology, under the influence of Western metaphysics (from the pre-Socratics and Plato to Thomas Aquinas by way of Pseudo-Dionysius and John of Damascus), has so often emphasized the incomprehensibility of God as Trans-Word or Non-Word, etc., that one wonders at the acknowledgment of the Scriptures and the reality of the incarnation. Classically, God is discussed via analogy so as to give real affirmation of God and so as to avoid the skepticism produced by equivocation. Yet classical analogy in God-talk has in fact concluded that God's essence is preserved in mystery and spoken of still in negative terms. Classical analogy is actually agnostic in its speaking of God. At the doorstep of classical analogy (that has imbibed of Western metaphysics at the expense of the biblical witness) Jüngel places much of the blame for modern doubt about God. Jüngel argues that God has shown himself, pointedly in Jesus of Nazareth, as One who speaks out of himself in the Word and encounters human existence. God in Jesus the Crucified One has made himself knowable and speakable. In Jesus the "parable of God," God comes and in his great distance (distinction) establishes his greater nearness to man. The name of such a One is Love.

In his closing section, "On the Humanity of God," Jüngel initiates a brief review of his early question "Where is God?" (rather than "what" or "whether"). This must be understood as it relates to the modern atheistic meaning of what was originally a christological statement, i.e., the death of God. God must be understood in unity with perishability by the identification of the living God with the crucified Jesus. Herein is the union of death and life for the sake of life which is the necessary essence of love. This is necessitated because "God is love." This statement from 1 John 4:16 is at the heart of Jüngel's exposition of God's triunal revelation reflected in Jesus of Nazareth. The life of Jesus in the act of the Word tells the story of God's coming. Through the church, the story of God's coming near to man in Jesus is now told and re-told, and man is turned outward or liberated from himself by it. By emphasizing the "whereness," the thinkability, and the speakability of God whose *being is in coming*, Jüngel is emphasizing the God *who is love*. This is both a statement and an event expressed in Jesus the Crucified and Resurrected One. Throughout Jüngel's chap. 5 there is intense discussion of this statement/reality as the only real basis for God tri-unity. Through a

hermeneutical and metaphysical analysis of love (via markedly Hegelian patterns), Jüngel expresses his thesis point. Not from any vague trinitarian NT statements but only from the reality of God who is love can one establish the fact and necessity of the tri-unity of the God who has come near in Jesus.

In analysis, one must first emphasize the positive elements of Jüngel's colossal work. His discussion on the background of modern theological doubt is very helpful and ought to be heeded. In desiring to magnify God's absolute glory it is possible to emphasize him as so vastly beyond and essentially unthinkable that the revelation of God and the incarnation of the Son of God are made theologically impossible! Further, I appreciated Jüngel's desire to overcome modern doubt by a reaffirmation of the biblical perspective of God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. In this the "where-ness" of God is clearly important in the modern God-talk debate. Finally, Jüngel's discussion of hermeneutical issues (as related also to God-talk) is very helpful and informative. Jüngel's historical, philosophical, and theological expertise is vast and with these tools he clearly desires to strengthen the foundations of the church on the one hand, and to make clear the final inappropriateness of modern theological and philosophical skepticism.

However, Jüngel's profound thesis is not an orthodox expression of the Christian faith. While his discussions are often helpful and always provocative, the influence of his mentor, Karl Barth (see Jüngel's *God's Being is in Becoming*), is clear. Jüngel does not merely mimic Barth, but many of the criticisms leveled at Barth in the past are at least partially applicable to Jüngel. Though he desires to be scriptural, Jüngel clearly picks and chooses only the scriptures which supposedly support his views. His Christology, while at times hinting at the Chalcedonian conclusion, is semi-adoptionist and at times reflects the process theology view of Christ as the man most fully apprehending God's nearness and creative love. Jüngel's trinity, as was Barth's, is quite Hegelian and often modalistic. Furthermore, this translation is often hard to read (this is not Guder's fault, for Jüngel's German is notoriously difficult).

Despite these major problems, this text is recommended for the professional theologian and advanced student in theology. It is an excellent treatment of the present situation. Jüngel's formulations should provoke interaction and refinement of the orthodox expression of the living God who has revealed himself by his incarnate Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Death and the Afterlife, by Robert A. Morey. Minneapolis: Bethany, 1984. Pp. 315. \$11.95. Paper.

In his Foreword, Walter Martin remarks that this book by Robert Morey will become "a standard reference work" on the subject of death and the afterlife. In the Preface, Roger Nicole notes the technical precision in Morey's research. The book consists of two major parts ("Exposition" and "Defense")

and two appendices. The five chapters in Part I chiefly pursue the hermeneutical, lexicographical, extra-biblical, and theological background and meanings of a variety of topics. Included are treatments of body, soul and spirit, Sheol, Hades and Gehenna, as well as everlasting life and eternal punishment. There are also five chapters in Part II, devoted chiefly to polemics against materialism, annihilationalism, universalism and occultism. The two appendices deal respectively with Alfred Edersheim's position on eternal punishment and quotations from "church fathers," although the material is taken from only two, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. The book then closes with a Selected Bibliography and three indices.

This volume generally exhibits a high degree of scholarship. One is repeatedly impressed by the amount of background material and research which had to be done in order to interact properly with the individual topics in Part I. Chap. 1, as an example, sets forth hermeneutical guidelines for the scriptural study of death and the afterlife. Many unbiblical aberrations are the result of improper interpretation. By performing such a foundational task, Morey lays the groundwork for his later conclusions. Other instances of proper research procedures include Morey's careful attention to the meanings of words, the exegetical contexts, and extra-biblical meanings supplied by intertestamental and rabbinic sources.

Part II is concerned with somewhat different material, chiefly defending the biblical options set forth in the first part against non-biblical views. Chap. 7 is a pointed and insightful critique of philosophical materialism. Chap. 10 contains good warnings against any involvement in the occult, especially by the Christian. This is timely in light of the tendency, even among Christians, to tamper with this area out of curiosity. Few sins are condemned so strongly in Scripture (cf. Deut 18:9-12, 14; Lev 20:27; and Rev 21:8).

Lastly, the Bibliography is generally excellent, including some relatively obscure works. Yet, there are some problems in this section, a few of which will be noted momentarily.

Generally speaking, this volume by Morey is a well-researched treatise on the biblical data concerning death and eternal life. However, there are areas in this work which are problematical and need strengthening.

One such area concerns the Bibliography, just mentioned for its general strengths. While a few small problems might simply be overlooked, several reoccur. For instance, it was frustrating to be referred to the Bibliography for several books by certain authors, only to find that those books were not included there (pp. 99, 284, 286). More serious, however, is that in Morey's major critique of Karl Barth (pp. 227-31, 236-38), including direct references to his writings, primary sources are absent from both the footnotes and the Bibliography. The reader should be directed to the original sources against which Morey's criticisms can be checked.

Second, in the "Life After Life" section of chap. 10 (pp. 262-64), researchers are blamed for some things of which they are not generally guilty, such as whether "life after life" experiences are termed near-death or post-death. For instance, Raymond Moody does not generally (if ever) call them "after death experiences," as Morey asserts on p. 263. A more critical issue is

that Morey dismisses these experiences much too easily, citing several natural hypotheses (pp. 263–64). Yet, each of these has been thoroughly refuted in relevant publications which Morey does not cite at all. For instance, pharmaceutical, neurological, physiological, or psychological causes are unable to explain the many corroborative experiences which have been recorded. Veridical experiences have not been explained by such subjective theories. But here is the crucial point. Morey also approvingly cites Maurice Rawlings's research. Therefore, he apparently speaks positively of (or at least allows for) Christian near-death experiences and experiences of a hell which are consistent with the biblical description (i.e., the "hell experiences" which Rawlings widely popularized). If this is the case, he should more clearly inform his readers that not all such experiences are nonbiblical. He need not make Christians who have had near-death experiences (and there are many) feel that these are necessarily due to occultic reasons. I believe that there must be a critical reevaluation of near-death experiences consistent with biblical norms. This brief section in Morey's book is important, given the contemporary scene. But its quick dismissals without distinctions tend to be both incorrect and misleading, necessitating a more careful response.

Third and most important, Morey's volume is limited by the exclusion of some crucial areas on the subject of death and the afterlife which have largely been ignored. Immortality of the soul (of several varieties) has, throughout history, been the chief competition for the Christian view of resurrection of the body. More discussion of this contrast in Part I would have been very helpful. I was also very surprised to find virtually no treatment of the *nature* of the resurrection body, including the implications of Jesus' resurrection. Further, if Morey's intention in chap. 7 is to critique the general naturalistic position that denies life after death, additional positions besides materialism need to be included. And with the current popularity of the Eastern religions, treatment of their views (beyond reincarnation, pp. 264–65) could easily have taken an additional chapter in Part II. These extra issues would have made this book even more relevant to current trends. As it is, the volume appears to be more oriented towards cultic claims than philosophical ones. Of course, any book could be strengthened by the inclusion of additional material, so these are only suggestions of some crucial areas.

The overall evaluation of this book, however, is surely positive. Perhaps its greatest virtue is the level and amount of research, as indicated above. But additionally, its "1, 2, 3 approach" keeps it interesting and very readable. The weaknesses critiqued here could easily be remedied.

The topic of death and the afterlife is always a popular one. For the Christian, Scripture presents infallible guidelines. Though many are looking to the occult, Scripture seriously warns against such an approach. Accordingly, I recommend this book as a textbook for courses on cults or eschatology, whether for group studies or for personal reading. Much noteworthy data is supplied which needs to be studied and digested.

Designs and Origins in Astronomy, edited by George Mulfinger, Jr. Creation Research Society Monograph Series, No. 2. Norcross, Georgia: Creation Research Society Books, 1983. Pp. 151. No price.

Creation science holds that evangelical and scientific discussion are not mutually exclusive, for under the Creator God both spheres are actually one. What we are left with, then, is a formidable amount of explaining to do when science and Scripture appear to conflict. Such is the aim of this second in the Creation Research Society's monograph series, a collection of articles by seven authors that tackles a number of scientific questions.

The arrangement of topics is both logical and satisfying. Two essays begin and end the collection by setting forth the creationist perspective that undergirds it, and between these two statements appear eight technical papers critiquing the evolutionist perspective, first on the universe as a whole and then on the solar system in particular.

The four articles that discuss the universe in general begin with a keynote paper by Donald DeYoung and John Whitcomb, "The Origin of the Universe." This paper is an excellent introduction to those that follow. It is perhaps the most general of them all, and it introduces not only the principal noncreationist view—the "big bang" hypothesis—but also a number of ideas that are considered in greater detail later in the book, such as the stellar evolution scheme and the question of solar fusion. The "big bang" hypothesis is not plausible. It requires more time than some observations suggest the universe has had, and it does not account either for the initial formation of stars nor the order observable in the universe. The authors also point out the fruitlessness (so far) of man's search for extraterrestrial life, and suggest that there is none to be found because life was installed only on this planet. Their conclusion (which should come as no surprise to *GTJ* readers) is that the best explanation for universal origins is not a cosmic explosion but a divine creation—that cosmic genesis and canonical Genesis coincide.

Succeeding chapters grow more detailed. Indeed, the next one, a discussion by Emmett Williams of the "big bang" model as seen from a thermodynamic perspective, is memorable chiefly for its detail. Williams's main argument has been aired before—namely, that no evolutionary model satisfactorily explains the origins of mass/energy or how, in a universe that moves inexorably toward equilibrium (maximum entropy), a homogeneous state of mass/energy at thermal equilibrium (the fireball that immediately followed the explosion) could develop into a heterogeneous state of mass/energy at a decided *disequilibrium* (the current cosmos). What makes Williams's article valuable is the detail he brings to his subject. The nontechnical reader who is looking for new arguments will not find them here; but it could be that Williams has given us the definitive restatement of the old ones.

Donald DeYoung's article, "The Redshift Controversy," considers astronomical distances. DeYoung examines the established technique of measuring the distance of a light-emitting object from the earth by studying its redshift, that is, the apparent decrease in frequency of the light it emits as it recedes from the observer. This technique is the only one that yields distances in billions of light-years. A number of observations, however, particularly those

involving quasars, suggest that this technique is not as dependable as one could wish. Indeed, all techniques that measure distances greater than three hundred light-years are open to question, and certainly should not be taken as a basis for dogma. Moreover, DeYoung proposes other explanations for the observed redshift, suggesting that these stellar objects may not be receding from the earth at all. We simply do not understand enough about the nature of space and light to pontificate on these matters. Not only estimates of stellar distance, but even the doctrine of an expanding universe could be extremely weak.

Paul Wilt completes the first section of technical papers by explaining the evolutionist consensus concerning "nucleosynthesis" (how the universe moved from the initial explosion stage to the existence of individual elements) and stellar evolution, and the weakness of this consensus.

The second section of papers focuses on the solar system. The first paper, Paul M. Steidl's "Planets, Comets, and Asteroids," offers a delightful tour of the planetary system. Not only does Steidl bring together many pieces of information with which I was unfamiliar, but he also is not afraid to point out those facts that pose problems for creationism.

The other three papers in the section deal with the sun. Whereas Paul Wilt's "Nucleosynthesis" treated the evolutionist scheme of stellar evolution, Hilton Hinderliter's informative but simple "The Shrinking Sun" and Steidl's "Solar Neutrinos and a Young Sun" deal with another evolutionist doctrine: solar fusion. After challenging the generally accepted fact that stars are "fusion furnaces," Hinderliter and Steidl discuss alternate explanations for sunlight, such as energy released by gravitational contraction. The main reason these explanations have been rejected appears to be that they make the solar system too young to fit evolutionary hypotheses. Fusion, however, is not an acceptable explanation, making young-sun explanations all the more likely. Hinderliter finishes the section with "Short-Term Changes in the Sun," discussing other solar phenomena with chronological implications.

Completing the book is John C. Whitcomb's "A Scriptural Framework for Astronomy" (also available separately from BMH Books). This finale is properly placed. As George Mulfinger's opening article, "A Teleological Study of the Universe," sets forth the correct perspective for viewing astronomical data—that is, recognizing intelligent design in the observed phenomena—and so properly introduces technical papers containing the data, so Whitcomb's article makes the transition between the papers and further research by setting forth fundamental, biblical axioms for that research. It should be beginning reading for every Christian astronomer.

Two things must be said about this book. First, the subject is fascinating and the treatment valuable. All Christian leaders, if they have any familiarity with astronomy and/or physics, will profit from its contribution to the creation/evolution debate. At the very least, reading it will acquaint them with the major issues in the matter of cosmogony. It will also question many assumptions that many have accepted as dogma, such as stellar evolution, distance measurement via redshift, black holes (which exist only as a mathematical construct; none have been found), and even stellar fusion. For its contribution to clarity in the present controversy, the book is highly recommended.

At the same time, it should be noted that the book is not a polished work. Some of the material was transplanted from the *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, and although the preface says that the material was modified to fit the present book, occasionally the reader will find a few items that escaped the refitting (such as references to "this journal" [pp. 111, 118] and the failure to mention that a referenced article is in the present book beginning on p. 107 [n. 1, p. 131]).

More importantly, there is no general introduction of terms for the nontechnical reader. *Microstates*, for example, appears on p. 27 with no definition, although it clearly has technical meaning. The term *cosmological principle* is used on p. 13 without a definition and is not explained until p. 52, but then *anthropic cosmological principle* appears on p. 60 with quite a different meaning. Some kind of orientation, or at least a glossary, would have been helpful.

Furthermore, the book appears to have been very poorly edited. Typographical errors abound, as do mistakes in typesetting style. Periods frequently vanish, commas appear in place of periods in one set of endnotes, and at least one footnote and part of another have been lost completely (nn. 14, 15, p. 104). Occasionally there is a barbarism such as "the existence of compounds related to life are nonexistent on Mars" (p. 86), which should have been caught by a copy-editor. Table 1 on p. 115 is laid out in such a way that its meaning is obscured. These problems should not deter anyone from reading the book, but the reader should be warned that there are rough waters ahead. The publishers would be well advised to correct the problems in a later printing.

By placing his "A Teleological Study of the Universe" first in the book, editor Mulfinger makes it clear that he does not expect the collection to change the minds of evolutionists. The world may well be immunized by now against the teleological argument for the existence of God; to secular minds, an ordered universe may suggest but will not prove a Creator.

Nevertheless, the book does perform two important functions. First, it provides for creationist readers a rare source of information concerning the weaknesses of commonly held scientific opinion. Thus it should enable better communication with those to whom such opinion is treasured belief, and it should also reassure those who, conscious of their own ignorance, are troubled by evolutionist questions. Second, it exposes and clears away some false assumptions that block fruitful investigation. With these obstacles cleared away, perhaps we may get on with finding out how the universe *really* works.

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Keep In Step With the Spirit, by J. I. Packer. Old Tappan: Revell, 1984. Pp. 301. \$11.95.

In this volume J. I. Packer gives a careful and balanced approach to the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. The work is not a dry, dusty reflection upon the Spirit, but a stirring call to the church to life in the Spirit.

Given the contemporary emphasis on the Spirit in so many different communities of faith, the book addresses timely concerns. Packer is concerned with theological precision, yet he has a sympathetic understanding of those outside his theological tradition.

Packer sets the stage for his work with a brief survey of the biblical texts that focus upon the Spirit. In no way does he attempt to interact with contemporary biblical scholarship in this area since that would be outside the scope of his study. While it is written in such a way that the lay person can read and profit from the work, its historical analysis is also valuable for the theologian.

After setting the stage, Packer moves carefully through the Augustinian, Wesleyan, and Keswick traditions and their various approaches to the spiritual life. It is noticeable that this life is primarily understood in individual rather than in corporate terms. Packer finds the emphases upon perfectionism and second blessing in the Wesleyan and Keswick communities lacking in biblical support. He opts for the Augustinian tradition as a more biblical approach, supporting this by his exegesis of Rom 7:14-25 in the Appendix. Even though he works within the Augustinian tradition, he is not afraid to shy away from some of its aspects which minimize the importance of the Spirit. Packer affirms that people have found help in each of these approaches to the spiritual life, but acknowledges that long term renewal is not characteristic of the Wesleyan or Keswick approaches due to the frustration that develops in the lives of believers seeking a life characterized by perfection and then continually finding themselves struggling with the problem of indwelling sin.

The final chapters are summaries and evaluations of the contemporary charismatic movement and its approach to spirituality. Packer is quick to note positive aspects that have impacted people across denominational and theological lines. He is appreciative of the simple faith and the emphasis upon every-member ministry, body life, and freedom in worship. Yet he fails to see conclusive evidence of the need for sign gifts today. He also questions whether true renewal has taken place not only because there is a lack of genuine theological reflection and maturity but also (and primarily) because there is a lack of a sense of the holiness of God which brings understanding of sinfulness and the need for repentance. Packer traces renewals throughout the Bible and Church history and finds that the emphasis is characteristically upon the holiness of God.

In his summary, Packer finds parallels between the "baptism in the Spirit" in the charismatic movement and the "second blessing" or "second experience" (which has many names) in Wesleyan and Keswick circles. He affirms the need for understanding the primary ministry of the Spirit as that which brings life and magnifies the person and work of Christ.

There are many helpful aspects of Packer's writing, and it would be impossible to enumerate them here. Of the few weaknesses, the most important is Packer's lack of emphasis on the corporate ministry of the Spirit (see, e.g., his exegesis of Eph 5:18). But the strengths certainly surpass any weaknesses or other reservations that I might have. The book is a model for interacting with positions other than one's own and for evaluating them

honestly. All who work through this book will benefit, whether or not they find themselves in agreement with Packer's conclusions. It is a positive sign to see Evangelicals doing work in Pneumatology. One might also see Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*. I hope there are more to follow. The book deserves wide reading by those in the church and in the classroom.

DAVID S. DOCKERY

CRISWELL CENTER FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

John Wycliffe, the Dawn of the Reformation, by David Fountain. Southampton, England: Mayflower Christian Books, 1984. Pp. 133. \$4.50. Paper.

This profusely illustrated and very interesting book was published in 1984 to commemorate the 600th anniversary of Wycliffe's death. Author David Fountain is a graduate of Oxford University, where he studied under Kenneth B. MacFarlane, who wrote *John Wycliffe and English Nonconformity*. The influence of the professor upon his student is evident throughout Fountain's work, and in places he appears to have paraphrased his mentor rather closely.

Fountain's objective is to present Wycliffe's life and thought in a reasonable manner and to emphasize the heroic stature of his subject in such a way as to elicit a profound appreciation for Wycliffe's contributions to the evangelical faith. In this pursuit Fountain has succeeded well. He has produced a popular, devotional biography which is well worth reading.

Since Fountain did not write for scholars, it probably is not fair to criticize his lack of scholarly methodology. Since many readers of *GTJ* are scholars who want an academic appraisal of books reviewed, it seems appropriate, nevertheless, to comment on this matter. Fountain's work appears to be based on extensive reading in primary sources. The book, however, is almost completely lacking in documentation, although helpful excerpts from Wycliffe's writings are woven skillfully into the narrative, and chap. 12 offers selections from his sermons. Those who might wish to read the reformer's own works would be frustrated by the absence of references cited. In a popular biography this would not ordinarily be a major problem, but this work propounds a rather unconventional thesis, and if the author expects scholars to give his view a respectful hearing, he should document his argument thoroughly.

The thesis of this book is that Wycliffe was the first of the truly evangelical reformers in England, and that he "did more than any other man to change the course of English history" (p. 12). Fountain contends specifically that Wycliffe exerted a more powerful influence upon the English Reformation than did Martin Luther. That is, Wycliffe was the actual father of the Reformation in his homeland. This is an intriguing argument, one which the author has pursued vigorously. In order to substantiate it to scholars, however, he will have to supply copious documentation. I have published an examination of Luther's influence upon the first generation of English Protestants (*Luther's English Connection* [Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1979]) and

am somewhat skeptical about Fountain's conclusion. In any case, to establish his position he needs to present his evidence in verifiable form.

Although Wycliffe taught many doctrines which would later be regarded as Protestant, Fountain's assertion that the early English reformer taught justification *sola fide* is open to question. Most interpreters have contended that Wycliffe did not espouse the later Protestant understanding of this matter. Fountain has quoted passages from Wycliffe which appear to express the principle of justification through faith alone, but the quotations are undocumented, and as they stand they leave the question unresolved. The issue is not whether Wycliffe held to *sola fide*, but how he understood the *nature* of justification. Did he see it as a forensic transaction in which God declares sinners righteous entirely without regard to human contributions, or did he view justification as a *process* related to sanctification in the manner of St. Augustine? It is clear that Fountain thinks Wycliffe taught forensic justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ, but to persuade scholars he will have to present more evidence.

The above reservation notwithstanding, *John Wycliffe, the Dawn of the Reformation* is a thoroughly interesting book which deserves a wide readership. The author is a zealous evangelical whose fervor for the cause of Christ is evident throughout the book. The style is quite attractive, even though there are some errors of grammar, such as the failure to maintain agreement in number between nouns and pronouns (e.g., "parliament"/"they"). The brief bibliography would be of greater value if it included full data on all entries.

JAMES E. MCGOLDRICK
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Arno C. Gaebelein, 1861-1945: Irenic Fundamentalist and Scholar, by David A. Rausch. New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen, 1983. Pp. 297. \$39.95.

David Rausch of the Ashland Theological Seminary has written a very personal and readable account of A. C. Gaebelein. Many are familiar with Gaebelein and his son Frank's work with the Stony Brook School. However, this publication will give the academic community at large the opportunity to become acquainted with this important American fundamentalist in the early part of this century.

Rausch examines the important formative years when Gaebelein, from his German Methodist background, grew in his concern for the Jewish people. He traces that development to the founding of the periodical *Our Hope*, a work that Gaebelein edited for almost a half century. The changes that took place in Gaebelein's theology in the early years of his editorship are discussed in light of Gaebelein's situation and circumstances in life. Rausch carefully explains Gaebelein's move to dispensationalism, which was foundational for his becoming a leading fundamentalist spokesman and statesman.

While genuinely irenic, Gaebelein was nonetheless intolerant of any form of liberalism and used his editor's position in *Our Hope* to communicate his

growing concern over liberalism in American theology. Yet, Rausch is quick to note that while Gaebelein was eager to involve himself in the theological squabbles of his day, he was more concerned to address himself to the exposition of Holy Scripture about the person and work of Jesus Christ. It was this devotional tone which set the stage for his analysis of liberal theology. Equally important was his articulation of dispensational eschatology. At this stage in history, Gaebelein was perhaps the finest theologian in dispensational ranks, with Chafer and Scofield looking to him for guidance. Gaebelein was responsible for a major portion of the initial Scofield study notes in the popular reference Bible.

The final chapters paint Gaebelein's involvement in conservative politics. His anti-communism is misunderstood by many and even posited by some as the basis for a supposed anti-semitism. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth, for Gaebelein sincerely loved the Jew and had a burning desire for the establishment of the nation of Israel. He looked forward to the establishment of the nation of Israel as much as any person during his lifetime. Sadly, Gaebelein died prior to the 1948 establishment of Israel. The closing chapters also show Gaebelein's concern for Jews who suffered in the Holocaust during the Second World War. His insights into the happenings in Germany at this time are striking when compared with the general naivety of others.

The personal side of the book is found in a section containing several photos from the family album and three lengthy accounts of conversations with Frank Gaebelein concerning his family life, his father's involvement in ministry, and the controversial years. These conversations are a unique contribution to a work of this type. The book is worth purchasing for these accounts alone. This is not to detract from the fine historical analysis offered by Rausch of one of fundamentalism's truly great leaders. Students interested in American Christianity and in the background of today's evangelical-fundamentalist movement will find this volume very helpful. Compared with other recent volumes tracing the early fundamentalist movement (Timothy Webber, George Marsden, and others), this account is more balanced and sympathetic. Edwin Mellen Press is to be congratulated for including this volume in its series on Religion in America. I trust that there will be similar volumes of equal quality added to this fine series. Yet, I hope that the price can be reduced on future volumes.

DAVID S. DOCKERY
CRISWELL CENTER FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

Leadership: The Dynamics of Success, by Cyril J. Barber and Gary H. Strauss. Greenwood, S.C.: The Attic Press, 1982. Pp. 126. \$4.95. Paper.

The authors admit in the introduction that the concept of leadership has not been adequately defined, and they suggest that their contribution is the presentation of leadership as a process rather than a collection of desirable characteristics. This reviewer's disappointment began with p. 4 where the authors state their intention to describe two primary styles of leadership and then to suggest a third as a desirable combination and improved approach to

leadership. The first leadership style is the "repressive-compulsive" type, later explained as involving an overemphasis on the intellect (cognition, volition) with too small a place for emotion or sensitivity to people. The second leadership style is the "emotional-impulsive" type, later described as not devoting enough attention to cognitive factors in decision-making. The third approach, the "rational congruent," involves a legitimate balancing of the two previous extremes.

Chaps. 3-8 amplify the basic premise outlined above by reviewing how Adam's sin so corrupted our nature that we are off balance and tend to overemphasize either the intellectual or the emotional. This reviewer was looking for practical suggestions for improving leadership skills and found very little of benefit in these chapters. In addition there were several areas of minor theological or exegetical concern. For example, the word "soul" was used ambiguously in several contexts. An illustration may be found on p. 55 where the authors imply that Gen 2:7 is proof that man is composed of body and soul. Likewise, it requires a very selective use of the biblical data to imply that Jesus always accepted people, tolerated their imperfections, and persistently developed all that was worthwhile in them (pp. 110, 113). There are also hints of the possibility of some mystical ministry of the Holy Spirit who makes us more competent as managers (p. 37) by forewarning us of pending events by means of an inner prompting (p. 111). This reviewer cannot find biblical warrant for such a ministry of the Spirit with believers.

I do wish to commend the material found on pp. 5-24 (part of chap. 1, the Introduction, and all of chap. 2), which highlights the problems faced in management by pointing to man's basic needs for acceptance (belongingness), affirmation (worth), and actualization (competence), and by illustrating the destructive cycles of decline caused by poor management. In reading this material I found a brief section which perfectly described me and my own frustrations—as well as descriptions of several of my colleagues!

CHARLES R. SMITH
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Biblical Preaching: An Expositor's Treasury, ed. by James W. Cox. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983. Pp. 372. \$19.95.

The concept behind this volume is one which has appealed to this reviewer for some time. It strives to examine each of the major sections of the Bible from a twofold perspective, and each of the 20 chapters of the book follows a similar format. Each chapter begins with hermeneutical and exegetical matters relevant to the Scripture portion being considered; this is followed by examples of, or suggestions toward, homiletical studies from selected passages within that Scripture portion. Over 200 biblical texts receive some type of direct comment and homiletical suggestions. Although some of these are quite brief, others are more detailed and should stimulate the preacher's mind. A full index of Scripture references is also a definite asset to the book.

The editor of the volume is Professor of Christian Preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and seven of the other 17 contributors are either past or present professors at the same seminary. Other institutions represented are: Union Theological Seminary, Cambridge University, Virginia Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Anderson School of Theology, Virginia Union University, Toronto School of Theology, University of Zurich, Harvard Divinity School, and Lexington Theological Seminary. In view of the background of the authors, the editor's observation in the Introduction about one of the underlying assumptions of the book is understandable: "The historical-critical method is essential to a thorough understanding of the text in its present significance."

Nine chapters of the book deal with the OT. These are concerned with the subject of preaching from the "Primeval Narratives of Genesis," "Patriarchs," "History of the Exodus Wanderings and the Settlement," "Narratives of the Monarchy," "Wisdom Literature," "Psalms," "Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel," "Minor Prophets," and "Daniel, Ruth, Esther, and the Song of Songs." These chapters extend from pages 17–168. Thus, less than half of the book is devoted to the OT, which is three-fourths of the Bible. Additionally, the OT is generally more abused in much of contemporary preaching than is the NT. Therefore, it needs more depth of treatment and not less, as is the case in this volume.

Eleven chapters of the book deal with the NT. These deal with the subject of preaching from the "Synoptic Gospels," "Birth of Jesus," "Sermon on the Mount," "Miracle Stories of the Gospels," "Parables," "Passion and Resurrection Narratives," "Fourth Gospel," "Luke–Acts," "Pauline Epistles," "Hebrews and the General Epistles," and "Eschatological Texts." The first seven of these NT chapters and half of the eighth deal with material in the four Gospels. The chapters dealing with preaching from the NT extend from pages 169–368, with the chapters devoted to the Gospels covering from pp. 169–305. Thus, about half of the NT, Romans–Revelation, is considered in only 63 pages.

The volume has a few errors of fact in it. On p. 39 Abraham's dishonesty about Sarah being his sister is said to be in Gen "12; 20; and 26." In actuality, ch. 26 deals with Isaac, not Abraham. On p. 63 a section of the book of Joshua is said to extend from 23:1–26:28. In reality, Joshua ends at 24:33. On p. 215 the reference given twice as Matt 5:21–28 should instead be 5:21–48. On p. 253 the word *speaks* is misspelled "spseaks."

The higher critical views of the author are disconcerting to this conservative reviewer. Several examples of this are: "Genesis 1:1–2:4a is generally regarded as Priestly material" which "was completed by 500 B.C." (p. 18); "The Yahwist editor and later the Priestly editor wrote to teach . . ." (p. 39); "The JEP narrative begins in Genesis with the myths of the Garden of Eden and the Tower of Babel" (p. 55). The biblical section that includes "Ex. 25–31; Lev.; Num. 1–10" is said to have "little homiletical material" except for Lev 19:18 which is quoted by Christ (p. 59). "Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah" are seen on p. 119, along with "Deutero-Zechariah" on p. 140. "The Book of Daniel was written ca. 165 B.C." (p. 152), and has "historical inaccuracies" (p. 153). Source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism are approved in the chapters that deal with the Gospels. In

chap. 12 the author says that "The church has squandered much of its time and energy in such contrived issues as 'the battle of the Bible'" (p. 228). In chap. 13 the author states that "we must recognize the process through which the miracle stories of the Gospels have passed in the passage from the actual event with its eyewitnesses, through the preaching and witnessing of the believing community, to the final form as it passed through the theological alembic of the mind of the redactor" (p. 231). Redaction criticism influences chap. 14's understanding of the parables when, for example, Matthew's contextual use of the parable of the lost sheep (Matt 18:12-14) "is scarcely what Jesus wanted to say when he created it" (p. 256). The "seven last words" of Christ on the cross are said in chap. 16 to "best be regarded as traditional or redactional articulations of the original 'loud cry' of Mark 15:37" (p. 292). Further examples could be given, but these are sufficient to show the theological perspective of the book.

The goal of the book is to provide help to the preacher on each section of the Bible. Unfortunately, from a theologically conservative perspective, the goal was not attained. Although a pastor will find some good preaching suggestions and helpful ideas in this volume, the time spent in searching for them would probably be better expended in more conservative literature.

A volume following this type of approach, from a theologically conservative viewpoint, would be a valuable aid to preaching. It should vary from this present volume in that a larger proportion of material should be devoted to the OT and a more even distribution should be achieved in the NT books.

R. LARRY OVERSTREET
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Abortion and the Christian, by John Jefferson Davis. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1984. Pp. 125. \$4.95. Paper.

In the years that have elapsed since the Supreme Court's infamous 1973 *Roe versus Wade* abortion decision, books upon books, booklets upon booklets have been written on the abortion issue. It would seem that by now all has been said on the issue in every conceivable way, but such is not the case. John Jefferson Davis's *Abortion and the Christian* approaches the issue in a new and fresh way. In a mere 102 pages of text, Davis examines the social (chap. 1), ethical (chap. 2), medical (chap. 3), biblical (chap. 4), and legal (chap. 6) aspects of the abortion issue and does so in a thought-provoking, easily understandable manner. The book contains ample documentation (214 endnotes) from original sources (legal, medical, and theological journals) and a good bibliography along with an appendix of pro-life resources. Although the book is short and not comprehensive, it is the best effort this reviewer has yet to see of a Christian introduction to the abortion controversy.

After setting forth the current state of affairs regarding abortion-on-demand in the U.S., Davis explores three of the leading ethical positions regarding the abortion decision: (1) Joseph Fletcher's situation ethics, (2) Norman Geisler's hierarchicalism, and (3) the "life of the mother only" exception (better named the "self-defense" exception). He concludes this

discussion with a summary which contains this statement, "the key issue in the abortion debate concerns the personal status of the unborn child. Is the developing fetus a 'person' in the usual sense of the term?" Davis thinks, judging from the lengths to which he goes to in developing the "fetus is a person" thesis (chap. 5), that if one can prove this point all discussion is over. However, for this reviewer, such a position is untenable, not only for Davis, but for all pro-lifers who argue for fetal personhood. It is untenable because it misses the point. No definition of "personhood," either sociological or theological, can be met by a 2-week old zygote or even a 10-week old embryo/fetus. The real question is, "Is it human life?" If so, it deserves protection because the medical fact is that human life is a continuum from conception until death. To kill an elderly man, an eight-year-old child or a newly conceived zygote is to take human life and this is severely condemned in Scripture.

To argue the pro-life position by means of the "fetus is a person" argument is to play by the rules of the opponent in a rigged game. Davis himself admits that this type of argument is neither convincing nor conclusive when he states, "a culture's perception of personhood can change" (p. 60). This admission shows that were one to "prove" the personhood of the fetus, the abortionists could simply come up with a new rule for determining personal and human value. Also, on p. 62 in his summation, Davis admits that "Scripture does not appear to provide strict proof for the personhood of the unborn." In other words, nothing was proved. Now, this is not to say that Davis' argumentation is not cogent, because it is. It is rather to say that the whole point is moot.

In stark contrast to the futility of the "fetus is a person" argument, Davis has given the church a beginning but meaningful look at where a biblical pro-life argument should really be grounded—in the sanctity of God-created human life (p. 35ff.) and in the biblical concept of what Davis terms "the psycho-physical unity of man created in the Imago Dei" (pp. 40, 52ff.).

This latter concept has been almost totally overlooked in Christian writing on abortion. If it can be shown, as Davis begins to do (although the topic needs a more in-depth and exegetical-theological examination), that human life is a unity, i.e., if man as a living soul is body and soul in unity, then the taking of one (physical life) involves the taking of the other (soul or spiritual life). There can then be no dichotomy between fetus and person. If there is a fetus there is an entire human being. Here the matter of the traducian view of the origin of the soul should be further explored.

Davis's arguments in developing a biblical view of human life are often based on inferences carefully drawn from texts. Accordingly, he builds a formidable case. He is to be commended in this regard.

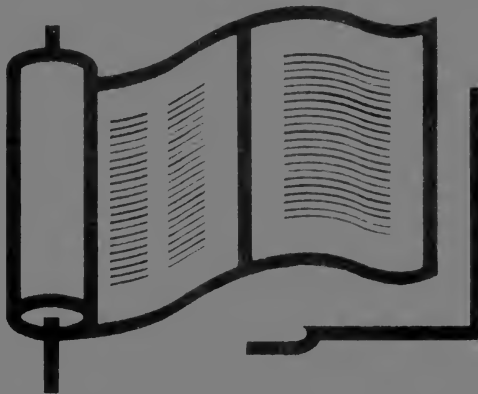
Davis has done a real service to pastors and involved Christian laymen. If there is one missing ingredient, however, it is that the book lacks a detailed agenda and rationale for Christian pro-life involvement. In this regard Davis's book manifests the main problem in the Christian church regarding the abortion issue. Most Christians know abortion is wrong. Most Christians know the Bible condemns it. But it all ends there because most Christians *do* nothing about it. *Abortion and the Christian* ably presents a biblical and

theological basis for a Christian anti-abortion stance, but it does not help to translate a theological conviction into action. It would have been appropriate for Davis to continue his cogent writing by outlining a sane, responsible Christian agenda for working against this shame in our nation. However, he does list ten different pro-life groups (with addresses) so that concerned readers can follow up on their own. Franky Shaeffer in his book, *A Time for Anger*, has set forth such an agenda but his tactics have been largely (and possibly mistakenly) rejected by the Christian general public as being too radical. Thus the church still waits for a respected Christian leader to take up the pro-life banner and lead the sleeping evangelical church community into an agenda of responsible Christian opposition to abortion.

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THE PROBLEM OF THE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF HEBREWS: AN EVALUATION AND A PROPOSAL

DAVID ALAN BLACK

The literary structure of the Epistle to the Hebrews is uniquely complex. In a writing so multifaceted, where topics are foreshadowed and repeated, differences of opinion must inevitably arise regarding the precise divisions of the argument. This essay examines three specific approaches to the structure of Hebrews: the traditional view, which divides the epistle into doctrinal and practical parts; the detailed literary analysis of A. Vanhoye; and the "patchwork" approach, which follows the changing themes of the letter from chapter to chapter without submitting every detail to one overriding theory of structure. Though each approach has its strengths, Vanhoye's offers the clearest analysis of the epistle. Detecting an intricate theme woven in an intricate style, he sets his analysis on a firmer base as part of a broad literary approach to the epistle.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

LITERARY structures, to use a scientific analogy, are like those mysterious species of fish which live on the ocean floor. As soon as they are brought to the surface to be examined, the change in pressure is too great for them, and they explode, leaving their investigators in a state of frustration and bewilderment.

This analogy unquestionably applies more to the structure of Hebrews than to any other major NT writing.¹ The common reader

¹C. Spicq has voiced a similar opinion: "One's first contact with the Epistle to the Hebrews is forbidding. In fact, in all the collection of the NT writings, this letter is, with the Apocalypse, the most distant from the literary point of view of our western and modern mentality" (my translation) (*L'Épître aux Hébreux* [EB; Paris: Lecoffre, 1950] 1. 1).

may know the picture-gallery of faithful men and women in chap. 11, the mysterious name Melchizedek, something of the priestly and sacrificial imagery, and possibly certain vivid passages, such as "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," but he may be unaware of the total nature of the author's thought. Indeed for many Christians the epistle has been reduced to a collection of proof-texts and memory-verses—a sort of biblical telephone directory, with chapter and verse instead of area code and number.

But if the common man has found it difficult to follow the author's movement of thought in Hebrews, the NT specialist has not fared any better. The study of the structure of Hebrews has followed a course like that of the Meander itself. With the passing of time, a sufficient amount of silt has accumulated to discourage even the most ambitious expositor. If the author had a carefully planned structure before him in writing, his arrangement is not easily perceived by his more distant successors, a fact which no doubt is behind the multitude of proposed outlines for the epistle.

This situation is especially unfortunate in the modern era, which is marked by a common recognition that literary insight and perception of structure and patterns are absolutely necessary if the NT documents are to be adequately understood. Phrases by themselves, or phrases strung together randomly, are of relatively little use, a fact known by anyone who has visited a foreign country armed only with a dictionary and no knowledge of the language. In biblical exegesis, as in general linguistics, language is not an accidental junk-pile consisting of a haphazard collection of different items. Instead it is more like a jigsaw puzzle, where each piece fits into those which surround it, and where an isolated piece simply cannot make any sense if it is removed from its proper place in the overall pattern. Concisely put, analysis must include synthesis if a text is to be fully appreciated. A thorough-going structural treatment is therefore essential if for no other reason than it enables the expositor to understand how a NT author has composed his work and how each part fits the whole.

The literary structure of Hebrews is uniquely complex. In a writing so multifaceted, where topics are naturally foreshadowed and repeated, differences of opinion must inevitably arise as to the precise divisions of the argument. Some very specific—and novel—suggestions have been put forward to explain the progress of thought in Hebrews, and we shall examine some of the more interesting of these in this essay (without any risk of the pages exploding before us).

THE TRADITIONAL DIVISION

On the most basic level, Hebrews is understood to consist of two main parts of unequal length, 1:5–10:18 and 10:19–13:17. They are held together by a brief but polished introduction (1:1–4) and a

conclusion containing final prayers and benedictions (13:18–21), to which is appended a postscript containing further personalia and a final brief benediction (13:22–25). The contents of 1:1–10:18 are called dogmatic or kerygmatic; the contents of 10:19–13:17 are labelled ethical, parenetic, or didactic.

This idea was well stated by John Brown over a century ago: "The Epistle divides itself into two parts—the first Doctrinal, and the second Practical—though the division is not so accurately observed that there are no duties enjoined or urged in the first part, and no doctrines stated in the second."² Brown goes on to speak of "the great doctrine" and "the great duty" of the epistle, referring to the superiority of Christianity to Judaism, and the believer's constancy of faith, respectively. Shown first is the superiority of Christianity to the angels, through whom the law of Moses was given (1:5–2:18); secondly, to Moses himself (3:1–4:13); and thirdly, to the Jewish high priest Aaron and his ministry (4:14–10:18). Jesus as Son, Apostle, and Great High Priest infinitely transcends them all. Thereafter follows the practical application of this truth, which consists first in a general exhortation to faith and endurance (10:19–12:25), and secondly in a variety of practical exhortations related to the Christian life (13:1–17).³

Granted that such a picture of Hebrews needs to be complemented by other details, on the whole it is representative of much of conservative Protestant scholarship today. Homer Kent (1972), Edmond Hiebert (1977), and Donald Guthrie (1983) understand the epistle in much the same way. Kent, distinguishing the abstract truths of the first part of the letter from the admonitions which begin in 10:19, writes: "This section of Hebrews consists of a series of exhortations based upon the great doctrinal truths set forth previously."⁴ Hiebert, despite his acknowledgment that the doctrinal interest of Hebrews goes hand in hand with the practical, divides the epistle into "doctrinal" and "practical" parts.⁵ Guthrie, a recent commentator on Hebrews, gives the following titles to the two parts: "I. The Superiority of the Christian Faith. II. Exhortations."⁶ The latter's opinion on the subject is most apparent when he writes on 10:19 that "the application of the preceding doctrinal discussion begins here."⁷ For these writers the

²John Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews* (New York: Carter and Brothers, 1862) 1. 8.

³*Ibid.*, 8–9.

⁴Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) 197.

⁵D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (3 vols., Chicago: Moody, 1977) 3. 92–100.

⁶Donald Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 58–59.

⁷*Ibid.*, 210; so also Charles R. Erdman, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1934) 20–24.

proclamation of Christ's supremacy, made during the main doctrinal section, prepares the reader for the concluding chapters which focus upon the practical consequences of the theological arguments supplied earlier. Since the same sequence is also found in many of Paul's letters (e.g., Galatians, Romans, Ephesians), even when doctrinal and parenetic elements are intermingled (e.g., 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians), the bipartition of Hebrews appears to be a balanced and logical conclusion.

But some modification of this traditional view seems to be underway. What was formerly assumed to be the epistle's kerygmatic first part (1:5-10:18) has been shown to be a highly systematic "interweaving [of] massive argument and earnest exhortation."⁸ Such basically hortatory passages as 2:1-4; 3:7-4:11; 4:14-16; and 5:11-6:12 incline the careful student of Hebrews to regard these passages as integral to the main purpose of the author. To label them "digressions" or "inserted warnings" is to beg the question of the author's purpose in including them in this part of his writing with such frequency. However dogmatic and doctrinal the teaching of 1:5-10:18, it stands closely related to the exhortations which are interspersed throughout. What, then, happened to the kerygma of Hebrews? According to Nauck⁹ and Kümmel,¹⁰ kerygmatic and parenetic elements are so intermingled that it is no longer possible to differentiate them. Kümmel even concluded that the hortatory passages which supposedly "interrupt" the epistle "are actually the real goal of the entire exposition."¹¹ He suggests that the underlying structure of Hebrews is indicated by the parenetic passages alone, which stand in parallel form at the beginning and end of each of the three main sections of the epistle. This would result in the following outline:

- I. Hear the word of God in the Son, Jesus Christ, who is higher than the angels and Moses (1:1-4:13).
- II. Let us approach the high priest of the heavenly sanctuary and hold fast our confession (4:14-10:31).
- III. Hold fast to Jesus Christ, who is the initiator and perfecter of faith (10:32-13:17).¹²

⁸Alexander Purdy, "Hebrews," *IB* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1955) 11. 580.

⁹W. Nauck, "Zum Aufbau des Hebräerbriefes," *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche* (1960) 199-206.

¹⁰Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. H. C. Kee; Nashville: Abingdon, 1975) 390.

¹¹*Ibid.* Cf. the comment by Otto Michel: "The high point of the theological thought lies in the parenetic parts, which exhort the listeners to obedience and seek to prepare the church for suffering" (my translation) (*Der Brief an die Hebräer* [KKNT 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975] 27).

¹²Kümmel, *Introduction*, 390-92. Michel's outline is very similar (*Hebräer*, 6):
I. The Speaking of God in the Son and the Superiority of the Son to the Old Covenant

Thus for Kümmel, the whole of Hebrews is nothing other than an extended epistolary parenesis, consisting of exhortations regarding the privileges and responsibilities of the Christian life.

Kümmel's judgment on the subject is not widely held, but it may be the most prudent. As Markus Barth astutely observed with reference to the structure of Ephesians, the juxtaposition of indicative and imperative (i.e., kerygma and parenesis) may have exhausted its usefulness.¹³ Their imposition upon a complicated document like Hebrews is as inappropriate as the attempt to measure the length of the Grand Canyon with a barometer. Such a method cannot fail to overlook the essential nature of the epistle from beginning to end. Floyd Filson in particular has declared Heb 13:22 to be the key to the whole epistle and its literary structure.¹⁴ In the phrase, "my word of exhortation," the author of Hebrews gives us the most apt description possible to state the nature and purpose of his writing. Hebrews is a written message, which sets forth doctrine, not for its own sake, but only to show the recipients how great a privilege they have to be related to Christ and what an immense loss they would suffer if they should allow anything to rob them of their faith in him. With every pronouncement containing important theological content, the author urges his readers to realize how much is at stake in their response to the gospel. The doctrinal content of the first ten chapters is therefore not an end in itself but merely a means to an end: to exhort these Christians to hold fast their faith, confession, and obedience. Hence "we understand Hebrews rightly only if we keep the urgent note of exhortation clearly before us in all our discussion of the form and meaning of the writing."¹⁵

If the traditional view of Hebrews sees in this epistle no more than a correspondence of preaching and teaching, of God's activity for man and man's good works for God in response, it may miss what the

(1:1-4:13). II. Jesus the True High Priest (4:14-10:39). III. The Way of Faith of the People of God in the Past and the Present (11:1-13:25) (my translation). Th. Haering's division of the letter is also much the same, though he holds to the partition of Hebrews into two (not three) *Hauptteile*: 1:1-4:13 and 4:14-13:25 ("Gedankengang und Grundgedanken des Hebr.," *ZNTW* 18 [1918] 145-64, esp. 156).

¹³Markus Barth, *Ephesians* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1974), 1. 54-55. The criticism of this juxtaposition with regard to Hebrews is found as early as the commentary of Hans Windisch (*Der Hebräerbrief* [HNT 14; Tübingen: Mohr, 1931] 8): "First of all it must be emphasized that Hebrews cannot be divided into a so-called theoretical and a practical part, but rather that the parenesis time and again interrupts the flow of the witness to faith and Scripture" (my translation).

¹⁴Floyd V. Filson, "Yesterday," *A Study of Hebrews in the Light of Chapter 13* (SBT 4; Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1967) 16-26.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 21. On the extensive sections of Hebrews given over to exhortation he writes: "The biblical exposition gives the background and basis for such repeated exhortations, but such exposition is not the author's basic interest and purpose" (p. 19).

epistle intends to say in particular. Scholars who push this juxtaposition so far have been unable to avoid questionable methods or to answer the objection that this procedure is arbitrary and forced. Moreover, the method fails to take into consideration the letter's obvious stylistic and rhetorical devices, specifically the recurring use of chiasm, hook-words, announcements, etc.¹⁶ But at least one concession to this approach is necessary. If the distinction between dogmatic and parenetic parts of the letter does not determine its external structure, it nevertheless contributes a great deal to the elucidation of its contents. For even if the author's main purpose all the way through is a supremely practical one, his method of dealing with the difficulties facing his readers is essentially doctrinal: to lay before them the permanent significance of Christianity and especially the absolute superiority of the person and office of Christ to Judaism. This is the heart of the author's subject and can be epitomized in the resounding "we have" (*indicative mood*) of the epistle's key verse: "We have such a high priest" (8:1).

THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF A. VANHOYE

But the most recent research of Albert Vanhoye, the noted Jesuit scholar and editor of *Biblica*, leads us still further. Building upon an earlier suggestion of Vaganay, Vanhoye claims to have found in Hebrews a carefully constructed chiasitic structure, repeatedly interwoven by key words which appear at the beginning of a section and then reappear at or very near to the close of the section.¹⁷ For example, the mention of "angels" in 1:4 leads into the section on the Son and the angels beginning in 1:5. "Angels" appears again in 2:16, where it serves to mark off a literary unit by restating at the end what was said at the beginning. The structure of Hebrews also includes announcements and anticipations on the author's part of subjects that are to be treated. In 1:4 he announces that Christ has a better name than the angels and then explores this theme in 1:5-2:18. In 2:17-18 he states that Christ is a merciful and faithful high priest and then treats this topic in 3:1-5:10. The subject of 5:11-10:39—the sacerdotal work of Christ, a priest like Melchizedek—is announced in 5:9-10 in the pronouncement that Christ was "designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek." Then, in 10:36-39 he speaks of men of endurance and faith, and well illustrates the character of such men in 11:1-12:13. Finally, in 12:13 the author exhorts his readers, "make straight paths

¹⁶See my discussion of style below.

¹⁷Albert Vanhoye, *La structure littéraire de l'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Desclée, 1963).

for your feet," and follows in 12:14–13:18 by urging specific ways by which this can be done.

Vanhoye's analysis has much in its favor and is due more attention than it has received. Perhaps the character and weight of his treatment would make a more decisive contribution to the identity of the literary structure of Hebrews if it were briefly summarized in English. What follows are excerpts from Vanhoye's findings occasionally augmented by further observations.¹⁸

The opening division of Hebrews (1:5–2:18) comprises two dogmatic sections (1:5–15 and 2:5–18) with a short parenthetic section between (2:1–4). The first dogmatic section deals with the Son's position as God, the second shows his connection with mankind, the author's purpose being to show that Christ is both the Son of God and the brother of men. Each dogmatic section forms a unity, as indicated by the repetition of key expressions at both ends of each passage (cf. 1:5 and 1:13: "to which of the angels did he ever say?"; 2:5 and 2:16: "it is not to angels"). With these statements the author has expressed his main thoughts. On the one hand, Jesus Christ is one with God (1:5–14); on the other hand, he is one with men (2:5–18). In either case he is superior to angels. It is necessary, therefore, to heed what he says (2:1–4).

In 2:17–18 the second main division of the letter is announced. For the first time, the author speaks of the priesthood of Christ. Here he gives Jesus the title of "high priest" and adds to it two important characteristics, "merciful" and "faithful."

In this new division, 3:1–5:10, the author focuses on both of these adjectives, though in reverse order. Jesus is presented first as a faithful high priest in matters concerning God, his Father (3:1–4:14), then as a high priest who is full of compassion toward men, his brothers (4:15–5:10). One can easily see the connection between these two aspects of the discussion and what was said in the first division of the letter, where the topic was Christ the Son of God (1:5–14) and the brother of men (2:5–18).

In this first subsection, 3:1–4:14, the vocabulary is that of faith: "faithful" (3:2, 5); "assurance" (3:14); "believed" (4:3); "faith" (4:2); and "unbelief" (3:12, 19). The theme of faith is thus central in this

¹⁸The literature which has been produced by Vanhoye on this subject is enormous. In addition to his seminal monograph cited in the preceding note, see esp. the following: *Situation du Christ* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1969); "Discussions sur la structure de l'Épître aux Hébreux," *Bib* 55 (1974) 349–80; "La question littéraire de Hébreux 13, 1–6," *NTS* 23 (1977) 121–39; and "Situation et signification de Hébreux 5, 1–10," *NTS* 23 (1977) 445–56. Our synopsis of Vanhoye's analysis of the structure of Hebrews is based on the author's own summary: "Literarische Struktur und theologische Botschaft des Hebräerbriefes (1. Teil)," *SNTU* 4 (1979) 119–47.

section. A short explanation (3:2-6) is followed by a long exhortation (3:7-4:14). In the explanation Christ is said to be faithful. The exhortation brings out the response: we must answer with our faith. In 4:15-5:10, however, the discussion shifts to Christ as a merciful high priest, a theme which emphasizes how far this high priest went to share our condition (cf. 5:7-8). Heb 5:9-10 then functions as a transition to the third main division of the letter. Here three statements are made concerning Christ: (1) he achieved perfection; (2) he is the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him; and (3) he has been designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Such are the main themes of the longest division of Hebrews, 5:11-10:39.

This third division is more complex than the others. The author declares openly that the explanation of his subject will not be easy (5:11), and in a lengthy admonition he warns his readers to pay careful attention (5:11-6:20). After this "introduction" the author discusses three unique yet interrelated themes, those which he had already mentioned in 5:9-10. Section A (7:1-18) considers the person and status of the priest. Christ is not a priest according to the order of Aaron but according to the new order which was foreviewed in the OT in the mysterious Melchizedek (Ps 110:4; Gen 14:18-20). Section B (8:1-9:28) considers the process by which this priest can stand before God. Christ came to God on the basis of a new offering which brought him "perfection." Section C (10:1-18) considers the use to which people can put Christ's perfect sacrifice. This offering is perfect in its effect: it results in the full forgiveness of sins and the sanctification of the believer. Thus in these three sections the author has discussed the three essential elements of priestly mediation: the status of the priest, his offering, and the application of his sacrifice to the people. This last point leads into yet another solemn warning passage (10:19-39).

The fourth main division of Hebrews is announced in 10:36-39, where the word "faith" functions as a hook-word connecting 10:39 ("those who have faith") to 11:1 ("now faith is . . ."). What follows in 11:2-40 is a very graphic picture of the great deeds of those under the Old Covenant, as well as a description of those times when their faith was tested. At the beginning of chap. 12, however, the emphasis changes. The readers are now invited to run with endurance the race set before *them*, following the example of Christ, "who endured the cross" (12:1-2). This exhortation to endurance continues to the final injunction in 12:13 to "make straight paths for your feet." In the Greek text the close connection between this verse and 12:1 is made obvious by the author's use of two words which share the same root ("paths" and "run").

The fifth and final division is introduced to the reader in 12:13. The preceding passage concluded with the words, "therefore, strengthen

Chart 1

		1:1-4	Introduction
I		1:5-2:18	The Name of Jesus
II	A	3:1-4:14	Jesus, Trustworthy High Priest
	B	4:15-5:10	Jesus, Compassionate High Priest
		5:11-6:20	(Preliminary Exhortation)
	A	7:1-28	According to the Order of Melchizedek
III	B	8:1-9:28	Perfection Achieved
	C	10:1-18	Source of Eternal Salvation
		10:19-39	(Closing Exhortation)
IV	A	11:1-40	The Faith of the Men of Old
	B	12:1-13	The Necessity of Endurance
V		12:14-13:18	Make Straight Paths
		13:20-21	Conclusion

the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble. . . ." These words are taken from Isa 35:3 and fit well with the theme of endurance. Then there follows a statement taken not from Isaiah but from Proverbs (4:26): "and make straight paths for your feet." The theme thus introduced is not that of endurance but rather one of behavior; hence what follows is a series of directives for the Christian life. The first sentence of this new division gives the direction in which "the paths" should go: "pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord" (12:14). It is instructive that just as the first division of Hebrews (1:5-2:18) included a short interlude (2:1-4), so also does this division. This short subsection (13:1-6) is located between two longer ones, the first emphasizing "sanctification" (12:14-29), the second the communal life of the church ("peace"; 13:7-18).

It is difficult to give a coherent picture of the structural components in Vanhoye's analysis because of the enormous amount of details which characterizes it. Vanhoye envisages a reconstruction totally unlike anything we have seen before, yet one which results in a relatively coherent and self-authenticating structure. His general outline of Hebrews, with slight modification, is reproduced in Chart 1.¹⁹

¹⁹Vanhoye, "Literarische Struktur," 133.

According to this plan, Hebrews is comprised of five concentrically arranged parts with several subsections²⁰ (see Chart 2). The first and fifth parts of Vanhoye's arrangement have only one section apiece, while the second and fourth parts have two subsections each. The third part, which has three subsections, clearly receives the emphasis. The midpoint of this concentric structure is 8:1-9:28, what the author himself terms "the point of what we are saying" (8:1).

Despite its complicated appearance, the fundamental principle of Vanhoye's reading of the text is simply that nothing in the discourse results from chance. The text is the product of unconscious stylistic features as well as those conscious factors of which the author is quite cognizant. In sum, Vanhoye's analysis of Hebrews presupposes that everything in the text is motivated.

One recognizes in this epistle the work of a true man of letters whose extraordinary talent is enhanced by excellent powers of organization. In these pages nothing seems left to chance; on the contrary, the choice of words, the rhythm and construction of phrases, the arrangement of different themes, all appear to be controlled by the pursuit of a harmonious balance in which subtle variations contribute to a wisely calculated symmetry.²¹

The analyst should therefore be attentive to significant elements within the text that will enable him to bring to light some of its underlying structure and symmetry. He should be particularly attentive to the stylistic devices in the author's language and composition. These factors, when accurately defined, supply important clues for an understanding of the biblical author's purpose in writing.

Vanhoye's contribution to the study of the structure of Hebrews, as important and ground-breaking as it is, has unfortunately suffered from those twin enemies of new research—neglect and temerarious opinion. Philip Hughes criticizes Vanhoye's research but fails to interact with it, stating simply in a footnote: "Vanhoye in his detailed study seems to me to err on the side of overstatement and to tend to find more stylistic symmetries and literary subtleties than are really present."²² Kümmel pronounces his view to be "contrived,"²³ but offers no evidence to support his verdict. The tendency represented by Hughes and Kümmel to ignore this new treatment is unfortunately represented in the majority of the latest commentators on the epistle. Bristol (1967), Schierse (1969), Turner (1975), G. Hughes (1979),

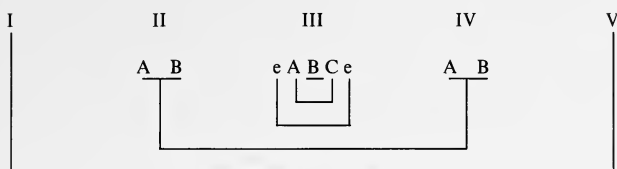
²⁰Ibid.

²¹Vanhoye, *La structure*, 11.

²²Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) n. 2.

²³Kümmel, *Introduction*, 390.

Chart 2



Jewett (1981), Brown (1982), Morris (1983), and Hagner (1983) all register no sign of Vanhoye's influence, though his work appeared in 1963.²⁴ Occasionally it is alluded to, only to be passed over. This rejection is mainly on the grounds that it makes the study of Hebrews more esoteric than it need be, or that it proceeds from the fertile imagination of the expositor rather than the text itself, both of which are highly subjective objections themselves.²⁵

Neil Lightfoot in his commentary is a notable exception to the prevailing attitude, however.²⁶ His reticence to accept *in toto* Vanhoye's conclusions cannot be equated with an attempt to ignore or dodge the issue. Like Vanhoye, Lightfoot pays the unknown author of Hebrews high tribute because of the originality of his thought and his art of systematic arrangement. The divisions suggested by Vanhoye offer plausible solutions to many questions that were often considered unanswerable. But to Lightfoot the comprehensiveness of the theory is not sufficient to demonstrate its validity: "[Just] because the author

²⁴Lyle O. Bristol, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (Valley Forge: Judson, 1967); F. J. Schierse, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969); George Allen Turner, *The New and Living Way* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975); Graham Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics* (SNTSMS 36; Cambridge: University Press, 1979); Robert Jewett, *Letter to Pilgrims* (New York: Pilgrim, 1981); Raymond Brown, *Christ Above All* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982); Leon Morris, *Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); and Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983).

²⁵Cf. the objection of Otto Kuss that "the current evidence of a systematic arrangement speaks more of the determination and hypothetical sagacity of the exegete in question than of a genuinely intelligible methodicalness of an artificial composition of the unknown author" (my translation) (*Der Brief an die Hebräer* [Regensburg: Pustet, 1966] 14). Vanhoye's analysis is also open to the minor criticisms voiced by J. Bligh, "The Structure of Hebrews," *HeyJ* 5 (1964) 170-77; Michel, *Hebräer*, 31-34; and J. Swetnam, "Form and Content in Hebrews 1-6," *Bib* 53 (1972) 368-85.

²⁶Neil R. Lightfoot, *Jesus Christ Today: A Commentary on the Book of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976).

makes anticipations and announcements, it does not follow that his outline must strictly coincide with his announcements."²⁷ Although he shares Vanhoye's interest in the style of Hebrews, Lightfoot is nevertheless disposed to follow a more conventional outline.

I would venture to suggest that expositors of Hebrews would profit immensely from the thoughtful contribution of Vanhoye. If it does not enjoy the status of absolute certainty (and what theory does?), it should nonetheless be studied as a viable alternative to the more traditional interpretation. Elements of careful structure are obvious in the epistle, but to recognize them the interpreter must be able to identify the formal criteria of literary analysis. The great merit of Vanhoye's treatment is that it shows concretely how an understanding of structural linguistics can serve the expositor. Lightfoot has presented an exhaustive description of the special stylistic devices exhibited in Hebrews, including chiasm, inclusion, hook-words, and announcements. He has shown that precisely the same style is characteristic of much of the teaching of Jesus, in which traces of inverted word order and repetition of thought can be detected. What Vanhoye and Lightfoot have done is to set this type of structural analysis on a firmer base as part of a broader approach to the NT documents and especially to Hebrews. Vanhoye in particular has innovatively drawn our attention to the fact that whoever wrote the epistle had been very well schooled in the art of composition. In Hebrews, unlike perhaps any other NT letter, the special topic treated, the peculiar issues involved, and the unique purpose in writing all find their reflection in the literary style chosen for addressing the readers. Thus, to ascribe to the author the skillful selection and ordering of material along the lines of Vanhoye's reconstruction does not seem unwarranted.

Vanhoye's chief contribution is his demonstration that the epistle sets forth an intricate theme by means of an intricate style. Hugh Montefiore, practically alone among modern commentators, has accepted Vanhoye's study on that basis: "His study carries conviction because the structure he proposes appears to have been worked out by our author as rigorously as the logic of his Epistle."²⁸ There is,

²⁷Ibid., 50. Bligh ("Structure," 175) also questions "whether a division based on purely literary criteria will reveal the conceptual structure of the Epistle."

²⁸Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1964) 31. The only other commentator who can be cited in support of Vanhoye is George Wesley Buchanan in the Anchor Bible series (*To the Hebrews* [AB 36; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1972] x): "The outline of this commentary has been modified in several places to concur with the insights on structure published by Albert Vanhoye." In his monograph on the structure of Hebrews Louis Dussaut has offered a structural synopsis of Hebrews based essentially on the results of Vanhoye's analysis, whose conclusions he has wholeheartedly endorsed with the exception that the five divisions offered by Vanhoye (1 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 1) are modified to three

however, one outstanding difficulty in the scheme of Vanhoye. His schematization of the letter exposes many stylistic traits, but his method at the same time makes several unwarranted deletions to secure perfect symmetry.²⁹ In the light of the studies presented by Tasker,³⁰ Spicq,³¹ and Filson³² in defense of the authenticity of chap. 13, Vanhoye's conjecture that 13:19 and 13:22-25 were later added to the original work can scarcely be accepted. This minor disagreement should not, however, detract from Vanhoye's overall contribution to the study of Hebrews. His suggestion can only be considered as tentative, but the possibility that the epistle follows his reconstruction has a great deal to be said for it.

THE "PATCHWORK" APPROACH

Unwilling to accept the traditional model and in apparent opposition to those engaged in refined literary analyses of Hebrews stand authors like F. F. Bruce and Leon Morris. The former treats the usual problems of introduction but surprisingly fails to consider the question of literary form and structure.³³ The latter understands Hebrews to be epistolary rather than sermonistic in form but fails to discuss the ramifications of this for his outline of the letter.³⁴ Both are content to follow the chapters and changing themes of the epistle from one aspect to another without submitting every detail to one overriding theory of structure. For example, Morris subdivides Hebrews into eleven units, without marking any main divisions (pp. 13-15).

In light of the variety of views on the subject of Hebrews's structure, an open verdict is perhaps a safe course to follow, and here the opinion of Origen on the question of authorship may well be applicable. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that an author of such skill should have failed to illuminate the structure in which his epistle was cast. It is, of course, conceivable that he designed his letter without any clearly defined thread of thought running through it. But a thing is not true because it is conceivable, but because the facts require it, and this does not appear to be the case here. There are many features of language and style which cannot be passed over so lightly

(2 + 3 + 2). See Louis Dussaut, *Synopse structurale de l'Épître aux Hébreux: Approche d'analyse structurale* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1981).

²⁹Vanhoye, *La structure*, 219-21.

³⁰R. V. G. Tasker, "The Integrity of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *ExpT* 47 (1935-6) 136-38.

³¹C. Spicq, "L'authenticité du chapitre XIII de l'Épître aux Hébreux," *ConNT* 11 (1947) 226-36.

³²Filson, "Yesterday," 15-16.

³³F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, 1964).

³⁴Morris, *Hebrews*, 12-13.

and which imply a much closer liaison between the thought of the author and the structure of his writing. It can hardly be maintained, therefore, that the author had no design before him while writing *currente calamo*. A writer who has an important message to proclaim may be expected to put it in a form more readily understood than this approach supposes. Consequently, whatever the merits of a "patch-work" outline, its considerable demerit is that it is achieved at the expense of a procedure which cannot commend itself as being in accordance with the principles of scientific criticism.

None of this is meant disparagingly. It simply underscores the truism that NT scholarship has been somewhat hesitant to take the plunge when it comes to epistolary literary criticism. Some commentators give a brief treatment; others give the question of structure no separate consideration at all. Some writers would like to think (or give the impression) that the outlining of Hebrews is a rapid, simple process. The real problem is, of course, far more complex, bewildering, and time-consuming. Scholarship stands still in no field, least of all in biblical studies, and a facile approach to the structural complexities of a document like Hebrews can easily lead to a situation in which one sees an amazing number of trees or even tiny plants, but fails to see the forest at all. A letter should be viewed in the great sections that constitute its whole and not simply in detached portions.

CONCLUSION

Summing up this meager review of the structural criticism of Hebrews, attention may be drawn to three points. First, the point of departure for the discussion of this question today—at least in my opinion—must be the thesis of Albert Vanhoye. At least at one point his analysis should achieve universal acceptance, namely the insight into the obvious stylistic devices employed by the author. Despite a weak attack against it, this aspect of his theory has proved its essential correctness as attested by Lightfoot, Montefiore, and Dussaut. There remains, it is true, a *je ne sais quoi* of authorship which excludes dogmatism or pedantry of any kind. But the detailed literary and stylistic investigation attempted by Vanhoye has resulted in the amassing of a phalanx of objective literary facts which simply cannot be ignored. Even if his study should prove to be factually untenable in the present case, the modern exegete should not shrink from a discreetly handled structural analysis of the text.³⁵

³⁵Vanhoye's analysis has already led to several helpful studies on the structure of specific pericopes in Hebrews. See e.g. P. Auffret, "Note sur la structure littéraire d'Hb ii. 1-4," *NTS* 25 (1979) 166-79; W. Schrenk, "Hebräerbrief 4, 14-16. Textlinguistik als Kommentierungsprinzip," *NTS* 26 (1980) 242-52; and P. Auffret, "Essai sur la structure littéraire et l'interprétation d'Hébreux 3, 1-6," *NTS* 26 (1980) 380-96.

Second, in view of the questionable usefulness of the juxtaposition of kerygma and parenesis as a hermeneutical tool, and of the great force of the warnings and exhortations found in chaps. 1–10, it may be inappropriate to divide the letter based on doctrinal and practical distinctions. The epistle presents its dogmatic themes in the function not of intellectual instruction but of the encouragement which the author seeks to inspire in the face of a crisis. Addressed as it is to a specific situation which called for both compassion and correction, Hebrews is no mere doctrinal treatise or theoretical essay. To understand it, or sections of it, in this manner is to miss the spirit of urgency which pervades the letter from beginning to end and which motivated the author to take up his pen in the first place.

Finally, even though expositors may continue to disagree among themselves as to the exact structure of Hebrews, there is still virtually unanimous agreement that illuminating exegesis involves an openness and receptivity to the text which are characteristic of the grammatico-historical study of the Scripture. In allowing the text to speak for itself and the author to be his own interpreter, one observes in Hebrews the literary mastery of an author who composed his *magnum opus* with the care of a Michelangelo working on the Sistine Chapel. This is obvious from the very first words (1:1–4), whose design is consistent with the language set forth throughout the epistle. Does not one get the impression that the magnificent prose in what Lightfoot has called “the most beautifully constructed and expressive sentence in the New Testament”³⁶ is intended to express not only the general theme of the writing but its compositional genre as well? Is it not possible that the writer is attempting to declare, at the very opening of his work, that the momentous theme which he is setting forth requires a literary style unparalleled in its beauty and form?³⁷ Perhaps the opening words are not an exposition but an invitation, not the apex of the composition but the narthex of a great cathedral, whose grandeur and symmetry become apparent only to those of us who will enter and attentively linger within. Not in the forcing of the structure to the surface, but in the submersion of ourselves, is there hope for the future of investigation in this fascinating area.

³⁶Lightfoot, *Jesus Christ Today*, 53.

³⁷For a thorough syntactical, semantical, and rhetorical analysis of Heb 1:1–4, see D. A. Black, “Hebrews 1:1–4: A Study in Discourse Analysis,” forthcoming in *WTJ*.

THE REORGANIZATION OF PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY RECONSIDERED

RONALD T. CLUTTER

The reorganization of Princeton Theological Seminary, leading to the withdrawal of J. Gresham Machen, Oswald T. Allis, Cornelius Van Til, and Robert Dick Wilson, is identified often as a triumph of modernism in its conflict with fundamentalism in the churches in the 1920s. However, a consideration of the situation at Princeton and of the events which took place within and outside the institution leads to a different conclusion.

The controversy at Princeton involved evangelical Presbyterians, all claiming loyalty to the tradition of the seminary. The conflict arose due to competing philosophies of seminary education and differing solutions for dealing with liberalism in the denomination. In this confrontation, pitting one evangelical faction against another, Princeton Seminary suffered privately and publicly. The denomination was called upon to assist in resolving the problem. The solution enacted by the denomination resulted in the departure from the seminary of some of the most capable defenders of the evangelical faith .

* * *

INTRODUCTION

AT the centennial celebration of Princeton Theological Seminary in 1912, institution president, Francis Landey Patton, declared that "the theological position of Princeton Seminary has remained unchanged."¹ At the sesquicentennial celebration, Hugh T. Kerr stated: "It is no secret that many contemporary professors at the seminary feel completely out of touch theologically with their predecessors of a generation or more ago on such issues as Biblical criticism, apologetics, the sacraments, and the interpretation of the Westminster

¹Francis Landey Patton, "Princeton Seminary and the Faith," in *The Centennial Celebration of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (n.p., n.d.) 354.

Confession of Faith."² The events which paved the way for this significant and precipitous theological shift are the focus of this study.

The historical background of these events is very familiar. The fundamentalist-modernist controversy was at full intensity. The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was particularly involved in the conflict through its affirmation of the five "essential and necessary articles"³ declared by the General Assemblies of 1910, 1916, and 1923. A response to the 1923 statement was printed and is known as the "Auburn Affirmation," a document which served as a challenge to the General Assembly regarding the prerogative of that body to impose doctrinal interpretation upon the church. To this challenge were affixed the signatures of nearly 1300 ministers.

In the midst of this conflict within the denomination, Princeton sought to proclaim the traditional orthodox Presbyterian position. The importance of this seminary in the struggle both within the denomination and in the larger fundamentalist-modernist controversy has been stated by many. Princeton has been called "the intellectual center of the fundamentalist reaction to the rise of modernism,"⁴ "the West Point of orthodoxy,"⁵ and "the academic center of conservative Christianity in the United States."⁶

Various interpretations have been offered concerning the issues that led to the reorganization of the seminary in 1929 and ultimately the departure of J. Gresham Machen, Robert Dick Wilson, Oswald T. Allis, and Cornelius Van Til from the faculty to serve at the newly-founded Westminster Theological Seminary. Louis Gasper has written that the problem was "over the question of the infiltration of liberal professors on the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary."⁷ That there were no liberal professors on the faculty during the controversy makes this view untenable. Carl McIntire, a student at Princeton during the conflict, has affirmed that reorganization was the result of the strategy of liberal denominational leaders to silence the conserva-

²Hugh T. Kerr, *Sons of the Prophets* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) xii-xiii.

³1) inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, 2) the virgin birth of Christ, 3) the death of Christ as an offering to satisfy divine justice, 4) the resurrection of the physical body of Christ, and 5) the supernatural character of the miracles performed by Christ (General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., *Minutes* 10:2 NS [1910] 272-73).

⁴George P. Hutchinson, *The History Behind the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod* (Cherry Hill, New Jersey: Mack, 1974) 175.

⁵George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville, South Carolina: Bob Jones University, 1973) 88.

⁶John W. Hart, "The Controversy Within the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., in the 1920's with Special Emphasis on the Reorganization of Princeton Theological Seminary," (unpublished senior thesis, Princeton University, 1978) 1.

⁷Louis Gasper, *The Fundamentalist Movement* (The Hague: Mouton, 1963) 16.

tive voice at Princeton.⁸ Again, the facts discredit the theory. The conflict at the school had been developing for a decade before the denomination was requested to investigate the problem by members of the boards at Princeton.

A popular interpretation expressed by some evangelicals is that the reunification in 1869 of the traditional Old School Presbyterianism and the more moderate New School faction rendered inevitable a broadening of the denomination as a whole and of Princeton Seminary as a part.⁹ It is true that one might expect a spirit of moderation as a result of this reunification but to declare that the fall of Princeton was an *inevitable* result is to leave the realm of historical study. No *necessary* link between the reunion of 1869 and the reorganization of Princeton has been found.

It is the thesis of this study that the tragedy of Princeton is the failure of two competing faculty factions to work harmoniously. It was demonstrated in that failure that a house divided against itself cannot stand. This division of the faculty revolved around two issues: (1) the requirements of seminary education, and (2) the nature of the church.

THE ISSUES

The Requirements of Theological Education

The generation which witnessed the early development of American theological modernism and its antagonist, American fundamentalism, also saw changes effected in the approach to seminary education. Lefferts A. Loetscher wrote:

The relation between the American churches and their theological seminaries was a reciprocal one: the theology that the seminaries taught at any particular time was soon widely held throughout the Churches; and contrariwise, changes in the Churches' activity and thought, reflecting changes in American social and cultural life after the Civil War, created demands for changes in the curricula of the seminaries.¹⁰

Two significant steps were being taken by some seminaries: the dropping of Hebrew requirements and the movement toward an elective system of instruction.¹¹ The impact of this movement was felt strongly at Princeton where instruction was based on a fixed curriculum established in outline form by the General Assembly when the

⁸Carl McIntire, *The Death of a Church* (Collingswood, New Jersey: Christian Beacon, 1967) 144.

⁹Edwin H. Rian, *The Presbyterian Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940) 16.

¹⁰Lefferts A. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954) 74.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 74-75.

church gave birth to the school. The areas prescribed were "Divinity, Oriental and Biblical Literature, and in Ecclesiastical History and Church Government, and on other such subjects as may be deemed necessary."¹² Princeton Seminary had as its educational purpose "to propagate and defend in its genuineness, simplicity, and fullness, that system of religious belief and practice which is set forth in the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Plan of Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church; and thus to perpetuate and extend the influence of true evangelical piety and gospel order."¹³

Benjamin B. Warfield claimed that adherence to the guidelines established by the General Assembly and the Plan of the Seminary was the chief responsibility of the Princeton curriculum.

In this outline it is required of every student whose preparation for the ministry shall be made in this Seminary, that he shall engage in the thorough study of Biblical Criticism, Apologetics, Dogmatics, Church History and the various branches of Practical Theology. These five departments of study, it will be at once perceived, constitute the essential divisions of what is called "Theological Encyclopedia," and when arranged in scientific order will be recognized as a scientifically complete theological curriculum. Every one who would obtain a comprehensive knowledge of theological science, in other words, must give adequate attention to these five disciplines: Apologetics, Exegetics, Historics, Systematics, and Practics; and in these five disciplines the circle of theological sciences is complete.¹⁴

Earlier, Warfield had written: "The curriculum is the place only for those courses which, when taken together, will provide a comprehensive survey of all the theological disciplines and fundamental training in each."¹⁵ The time spent in each of the five theological disciplines should be equal, with the exception of Old and New Testament exegesis, each of which should receive as much time as the other four categories.¹⁶

Warfield also recognized a need for students to have a knowledge of the Bible as a whole, a knowledge which some suggested should be met

¹²General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *Minutes* (1789-1820 Inclusive) 454.

¹³*Plan of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 4.

¹⁴[Benjamin B. Warfield], "Report of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary to the Board of Directors on the Curriculum of the Seminary," Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, 29 April 1903, 2.

¹⁵Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Constitution of the Seminary Curriculum," *The Presbyterian Quarterly* 38 (October 1896) 426.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 427-28.

through the addition of courses on the English Bible to the curriculum. Warfield, though in sympathy with the goal of producing ministers knowledgeable in the Bible, declared: "Our theological seminaries can never make 'the English Bible' the basis of their instruction, or a thorough knowledge of it the main object of their efforts."¹⁷

Over the objections of Warfield and the rest of the faculty, the Board of Directors responded positively to a student petition calling for instruction in English Bible. Samuel S. Mitchell was added to the faculty to offer extra-curricular instruction in English Bible and was succeeded after a term by W. W. White. In 1905, the seminary hired Charles R. Erdman to the Professorship of English Bible and Practical Theology. Among his responsibilities, Erdman was to develop the English Bible program so that it might become a more fully integrated part of the Princeton curriculum rather than an extra-curricular pursuit. In this endeavor Erdman came into disagreement with other faculty members and was called upon to address the directors concerning the problems. As a result the directors added two hours to the curriculum for the Practical Theology department in its teaching of English Bible.¹⁸

These additional hours given to that study did not receive the full support of the faculty. Warfield introduced "a resolution that elective studies based on the English Bible should not be allowed as minors in the course for the post-graduate B.D. degree."¹⁹ Paul Martin, registrar at Princeton from 1906 until 1932, wrote:

However, Dr. Warfield served notice upon the Registrar that Dr. Erdman's elective courses would not receive his necessary approval as minors in the registration by candidates of B.D. courses in the Department of Systematic Theology and maintained this ruling through the succeeding years. It can be said without fear or contradiction that disparagement of Dr. Erdman's courses has been a state of mind of the "majority" of the Faculty through his whole term as professor.²⁰

A student rebellion in 1909 resulted in the formation of a sub-committee by the Board of Directors to investigate complaints about the quality of education at the seminary. In opposition to the claim of

¹⁷Ibid., 436.

¹⁸Princeton Theological Seminary, Minutes of the Board of Directors, Meeting of 4 May 1908.

¹⁹Paul Martin to W. O. Thompson, 23 December 1926, Correspondence Concerning Machen Case 1925-1927, Robert E. Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton.

²⁰Ibid.

Warfield, the subcommittee concluded that the Plan did not establish a definite curriculum. It concluded that the Plan provided for a "finished product which is desired, and within the scope thus generally indicated, it places upon the Board of Directors, under the General Assembly the duty of framing the proper curriculum for furnishing that product."²¹ The subcommittee also concluded that there were too many hours required in the three year program.²² It stated further that changes in twentieth century culture required an alteration in curriculum to meet the need of proper ministerial education and preparation. "A half-century ago we were largely a homogeneous people; to-day the floods of immigration and the swift development of our city-centers have changed the character of our people, and the church faces a complex situation unimagined a hundred years ago."²³

In making suggestions contrary to the faculty thinking, the subcommittee touched on an important point.

We have learned from recent graduates, men say of five to fifteen years in the ministry, who are intensely loyal to everything in Princeton, that sometimes weeks at a stretch have been consumed in lectures in certain of the departments upon subjects of remotest interest to the pastor—as they strongly affirm, of no interest whatever—while other matters in the same department, which are very important to the pastor, have been practically overlooked. It is intimated by way of explanation that this is so because professors who had themselves never been pastors have no true conception of the relative importance of different subjects to the actual work of the ministry, and because, naturally enough they assume that the more difficult parts of the work call for the fuller treatment and the harder study.²⁴

Again it fell to Warfield to defend the curriculum as spokesman for the faculty. Regarding the requirements of the Plan of the Seminary Warfield said that they "do not need amending: they need only be carried out more fully."²⁵ In response to the faculty defense, the subcommittee toned down the changes that were recommended initially. The basic three year course remained unaltered except for the transferal of one hour of English Bible to the extra curriculum or post-graduate program in order to make room for an hour dealing

²¹"Report on the Supervising Committee of the Board of Directors of Princeton Theological Seminary," October 1909, 6.

²²*Ibid.*, 7.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*, 10.

²⁵Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Fundamental Curriculum of the Seminary* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1909) 9.

with "the Church's relation to practical problems."²⁶ The issue, however, was far from settled.

Patton resigned as president of the seminary in 1913 and a search was conducted for a replacement. The Board of Directors turned to one of its own members, J. Ross Stevenson, pastor of the Brown Memorial Church in Baltimore. Stevenson previously had served on the faculty of McCormick Seminary, teaching ecclesiastical history at his alma mater. He was not a Princeton man either by training or service. Thus the new president was viewed with suspicion by some of the Princeton faculty. J. Gresham Machen wrote home: "Stevenson's notions about theological education are ruinous—they are especially bad with regard to New Testament work—and then of course you know what an extremely weak man Stevenson is."²⁷

On the other hand, Sylvester W. Beach, a member of the Board of Directors, wrote to Stevenson:

But my chief joy in your coming is the assurance that it means a new and great epoch in our Seminary's history. Princeton once held leadership in the theology and movement of our Presbyterian church. For some years that has been lost. Why this has happened is a matter of little comparative importance. The point is, how to regain the lost ground? [sic] The first pre-requisite is head-ship in the seminary who knows and understands the practical problems of our day not less than the theological issues. The seminary needs a leader to train leaders evangelical and evangelistic, with a clearly defined message & mission. The problem of the Church to-day is the missionary problem. The church will gladly follow the lead of any man who will show the road to the heart of a lost world.²⁸

The two contrasting views of Machen and Beach continued until the time of reorganization in 1929. Ned B. Stonehouse wrote that 1914, the year of the election and inauguration of Stevenson, "marks the dividing line in the history of the Seminary."²⁹ Paul Woolley looked back to 1902, when Stevenson was elected to the Board of Directors, and declared: "It was an evil day for the seminary, for pious and believing though he was, he had no understanding of, or love for, the

²⁶"Report of the Supervising Committee of the Board of Directors of Princeton Theological Seminary," n.d., 7.

²⁷Cited in Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 216.

²⁸Sylvester W. Beach to J. Ross Stevenson, 2 July 1914, Confidential letters and documents of J. Ross Stevenson, Robert E. Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton.

²⁹Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 212.

great tradition which the theologians had been building for ninety years."³⁰ Rian wrote concerning Stevenson: "He came to Princeton not appreciating fully its theological position and emphasis and at the same time accepting the office of president on the terms set forth in the Plan of the seminary which he interpreted in the plain sense but which interpretation had never been enforced at the institution."³¹ He added:

From the standpoint of administration Dr. Stevenson conceived of his position as that of the real head of the institution who was to have a leading part in forming its policies, choosing its professors, inviting men to address the students and representing the seminary before the Church. One who did not know the history of Princeton and its administrative policy would be likely to accept that interpretation of the president's position from a reading of the Plan of the seminary. On the other hand, the faculty had always believed that the president was little more than the presiding officer who, with his colleagues, decided on the entire educational program for the institution.³²

In his inaugural address, Stevenson emphasized that Princeton Seminary was the seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and that it was "bound to heed the demands of the age as interpreted and emphasized by the Presbyterian Church."³³ Stevenson's desire that the seminary serve the whole church is not to be misunderstood as demonstrating a lack of theological conviction. The president contended that his approach was that of the early Princeton leaders who thought it proper to seek to train men who held doctrines hostile to those espoused at Princeton with the hope of reconciling such men to the theological position of the seminary.³⁴

Shortly after the inauguration of Stevenson, there was another move for change in the curriculum. The Board of Directors requested that a faculty Committee on Curriculum be formed and meet with the Curriculum Committee of that board in consideration of possible changes. Warfield, John D. Davis, Erdman, Frederick W. Loetscher and J. Ritchie Smith comprised the faculty committee.

Reacting to a proposal for reduced curriculum (a cutting back of hours included in the required program of instruction), Warfield staunchly defended the current program. Summarizing the losses in the proposed curriculum, Warfield wrote:

³⁰Paul Woolley, *The Significance of J. Gresham Machen Today* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977) 11.

³¹Rian, *The Presbyterian Conflict*, 65.

³²Ibid., 65-66.

³³J. Ross Stevenson, "Theological Education in Light of Present Day Demands," *The Princeton Theological Review* 14 (January 1916) 83.

³⁴President's Report to the Board of Directors, Princeton Theological Seminary, 11 November 1925, Princeton.

The reductions proposed aggregate no less than two hundred and forty hours for the fundamental departments of Hebrew, Apologetics, Old Testament, New Testament, Church History and Didactic Theology. These two hundred and forty hours make a whole half-year of sixteen weeks instruction in the seminary at fifteen hours weekly (or of fifteen weeks at sixteen hours weekly).³⁵

Such reduction was disastrous for Warfield, who also opposed a curriculum heavy with elective courses. He was convinced that the majority of the students would not elect hours in the areas he considered fundamental but would opt for the easier branches of seminary study which offered equal credit.³⁶ The real problem which faced the seminary, as Warfield saw it, was that college students were coming to the seminary inadequately prepared. His desire was that the seminary take such men and meet their needs not by lowering requirements but by preparing them to meet established standards.³⁷ This attempt would require certain propaedeutic courses, particularly Greek grammar, which would have to be taught to the student to prepare him for seminary—but such courses would be added to his program rather than supplant existing requirements.³⁸

Two proposals were considered by the committees on curriculum: (1) that the number of hours be reduced, and (2) that elective courses be introduced for programs leading to graduation.³⁹ Warfield opposed both proposals in a minority report.⁴⁰ The faculty, after two meetings of discussing the proposals and a tie vote on the question of reduced curriculum, approved the reduced curriculum by a nine to four vote. Warfield, William Brenton Greene, Jr., Caspar Wistar Hodge, and Geehardus Vos cast the negative votes.⁴¹ Machen favored the proposal only because he had concluded that it would be the best offer that would come before the faculty.⁴² The action of the faculty was interpreted by the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Directors as a

³⁵Benjamin B. Warfield, *Notes on Certain Proposed Readjustments of the Curriculum* (Princeton, New Jersey: Privately printed, 1914) 5.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 7.

³⁷Benjamin B. Warfield to the Committee of the Board of Directors on the Curriculum, 3 November 1914, Montgomery Library, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

³⁸Warfield, *Notes on Certain Proposed Readjustments*, 13.

³⁹"Report of the Faculty Committee on Curriculum," Princeton Theological Seminary, in Minutes of the Board of Directors, 5 December 1914.

⁴⁰The Minority Report of the Faculty Committee on Curriculum in Minutes of the Board of Directors, 5 December 1914.

⁴¹Minutes of the Faculty, Princeton Theological Seminary, 16 January 1915, Princeton.

⁴²Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 219.

sign of dissatisfaction with the current curriculum and a reduced curriculum was implemented.⁴³

Warfield was greatly disturbed by the turn of events and began to absent himself from faculty meetings. For the six month period during which Stevenson was in Europe ministering to servicemen during World War I, Warfield was present at every faculty meeting. At Stevenson's return, Warfield once again attended faculty meetings rarely.⁴⁴ Machen was disappointed, also, and may have left the seminary had it not been for the influence of his department chairman and close advisor, William Park Armstrong.⁴⁵ Machen feared that the emphasis on the practical aspect of the curriculum by Stevenson might result in a "pious liberal" filling a chair on the faculty.⁴⁶ Machen would watch Stevenson's actions closely.

The curriculum revision just surveyed did not cause the reorganization of Princeton, but it did serve to polarize the faculty and introduce further division.

The Nature of the Church

With the developing modernism in American churches, conservative men had to initiate a strategy for dealing with the new theology. Some men became quite militant and publicly called for the ouster of modernists from their churches while others took an irenic stance, waiting for time and proper denominational procedure to alleviate the situation. At Princeton, Machen assumed, not voluntarily, the leadership of the militant force. Stevenson and Erdman sought an irenic solution to the problem of liberalism in the church. Opposed to liberal theology, the Stevenson-Erdman party sought the solution to the matter through proper Presbyterian court action. The denomination had been quite careful to establish machinery for handling problems of false teaching and false practice.

It is important to note that the militant party at Princeton consisted of the men who taught the exegetical and theological courses, those areas in which liberalism differed greatly from orthodoxy. The moderates at Princeton were, for the most part, the men in the area of practical theology who were concerned especially about the people in the pew and their needs rather than about theological debate. Only Greene among the militants had had pastoral experience. Everyone on the moderate side at Princeton had held significant pastorates. An example of the difficulty as it existed at the seminary can be illustrated

⁴³Report of the Curriculum Committee to the Board of Directors in Minutes of the Board of Directors, 16 February 1915.

⁴⁴Minutes of the Faculty, 1915-1921.

⁴⁵Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 219.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 220-21.

by a letter written to Machen by a student transferring from Princeton to another institution.

As one student remarked to me, "How many on the faculty know anything about real pastoral work, from their own experience?" Or of what value is it to the student that his professor is the leading Hebrew scholar of the world, if in class he prances up and down and yells spasmodically at the top of his lungs, and tells jokes most of the hour? Such a class is ridiculous in the extreme [sic]. When attending this class even the ardent lovers of Princeton would joke about going to "the circus." Merely to rant for an hour against modernism may split the ears of the groundlings, but it cannot but make the judicious grieve.⁴⁷

Such an attitude is only matched by the words of a leading professor from whom I quote the following exact statement as given with great gusto during a class lecture, "You shouldn't care one snap of the finger whether one soul in your congregation believes what you say or not. It is God's truth you are giving those damn sinners."⁴⁸

The first important clash relating to the nature of the church concerned the matter of involvement in the Plan of Union of 1920. This proposal was not for a complete organic union but was a plan for a federation.

Under the provisions of the Plan, the Council of "The United Churches" would have authority, if and when member denominations desired it, to direct consolidation of missionary activities, but such consideration was not mandatory and could be "accelerated, delayed, or dispensed with as the interests of the Kingdom of God may require." The Plan also envisaged the transfer of at least some functions from denominational to a central administration but did not specify any particular transfers.⁴⁹

Stevenson, vice-president of the Committee on Church Cooperation and Union of the PCUSA, presented the recommendation before the General Assembly of 1920, due to the fact that the committee chairman was on his deathbed.⁵⁰ The recommendation offered to the assembly was that the denomination officially enter into cooperation with other churches as long as only churches of evangelical persuasion were involved.⁵¹ Erdman supported the proposal while Warfield,

⁴⁷ Alfred G. Fisk to J. Gresham Machen, 25 June 1926, Machen Archives, Montgomery Library, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Samuel McCrea Cavert, *Church Cooperation and Unity in America: A Historical Review 1900-1970* (New York: Association, 1970) 327.

⁵⁰ J. Ross Stevenson to J. Gresham Machen, 23 November 1923, Machen Archives.

⁵¹ General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., *Minutes* NS 20 (1920) 121.

Hodge, Greene, Machen, and Allis opposed it. Machen summarized his opposition: "At the General Assembly in Philadelphia in 1920, there was launched the most dangerous attack not only upon the Reformed Faith but upon the Christian Religion in general which had appeared in America in recent years."⁵² Stevenson wrote to Machen that when he had become aware of the inadequacies of the plan he "secured its rejection" in the Baltimore presbytery.⁵³ Machen was not satisfied with Stevenson's statement because the president had presented the plan to the assembly and had not advocated its rejection there. He wrote to Stevenson: "A man who loves the Reformed Faith with all his heart and believes that no matter what other churches or other individuals may think is true, will, I think, defend it whether it is popular or not and will carry his defence of it out into the public councils [sic] of the Church."⁵⁴ The proposal died for lack of support in the presbyteries, but the cleavage between the factions on the Princeton faculty had widened.

Machen's opposition to the new trends in the churches is expressed most clearly in his book, *Christianity and Liberalism*. He wrote that liberalism was not a Christian faith and, in fact, belonged "in a totally different class of religions."⁵⁵ He concluded that the church was in a state of weakness because it "has been unfaithful to her Lord by admitting great companies of non-Christian persons, not only into her membership, but into her teaching agencies."⁵⁶ He added that "separation between the two parties in the Church is the crying need of the hour."⁵⁷

With this understanding of Machen it is not difficult to ascertain why he had an aversion to the approach of Stevenson, who was not outspoken in his criticism of liberalism. Stevenson's confession of orthodoxy was not sufficient. Machen looked for a public proclamation by Stevenson regarding the issues which plagued the church. Not witnessing such a profession, Machen classified the president as indifferent.⁵⁸ He held the same opinion of Erdman.⁵⁹

The approach of Machen to the church has been interpreted variously. Loetscher considered the viewpoint to be Anabaptist.⁶⁰ Clifton E. Olmstead considered it "closer to Congregationalism" than

⁵²J. Gresham Machen to J. Ross Stevenson, 24 November 1923, Machen Archives.

⁵³Stevenson to Machen, 23 November 1923.

⁵⁴Machen to Stevenson, 24 November 1923.

⁵⁵J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1923) 7.

⁵⁶Ibid., 159.

⁵⁷Ibid., 160.

⁵⁸Machen to Stevenson, 24 November 1923.

⁵⁹J. Gresham Machen to Mrs. A. L. Berry, 21 March 1924, Machen Archives.

⁶⁰Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 117.

to the Presbyterian doctrine.⁶¹ Machen believed that the church was a voluntary society with no one forced to join. Therefore, requiring certain standards for entrance to and maintenance of membership was appropriate.⁶² He stated:

In order, therefore, that the purity of the Church may be preserved, a confession of faith in Christ must be required of all those who would become church members. But what kind of profession must it be? I for my part think that it ought to be not merely a verbal confession but a credible confession.⁶³

In arguing for the purity of the church, he added:

To that end, it should, I think, be made much harder than it now is to enter the Church: the confession of faith that is required should be a credible confession; and if it becomes evident upon examination that the candidate has no notion of what he is doing, he should be advised to enter upon a course of instruction before he becomes a member of the Church.⁶⁴

Machen viewed the tests of a credible confession not as challenges to the standing of an individual before God but only as a means of determining "with the best judgment that God has given to feeble and ignorant men, a man's standing in the Church."⁶⁵

This approach of Machen is not that of the Princeton tradition. Charles Hodge conceived the church to be a body of those who profess Christ.⁶⁶ For him the *true* church existed within the greater circle of the *professing* church and it was not only impossible but even evil to seek to purge the church of unbelievers.⁶⁷ It is not the right of the people, nor do they have the wisdom, to judge the profession of the one confessing faith.⁶⁸ A. A. Hodge continued this approach at Princeton with his teaching that the church was a "mixed community" that was not to experience separation until the end of the age.⁶⁹

⁶¹Clifton E. Olmstead, *History of Religion in the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1960) 551.

⁶²Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 166-67.

⁶³J. Gresham Machen, *What Is Faith?* (New York: Macmillan, 1925) 155-56.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 156-57.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 159.

⁶⁶Charles Hodge, "Visibility of the Church," *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 25 (October 1853) 680.

⁶⁷Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1871-72) 3. 572.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 3. 545.

⁶⁹Archibald Alexander Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, (rev. ed.; New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1878) 618.

Machen's position caused him conflict with Erdman when the latter was candidate for the position of moderator of the General Assembly in 1924. Erdman did not repudiate the support of modernists who backed him in the race. Machen could not understand how a man could claim to be of the Reformed faith and not fight for it publicly against modernists. In his militant approach, Machen appealed to the public at large through the printed word and the spoken testimony with the desire to rid the church of liberal leaders and influences. He did not seek a final verdict on matters pertaining to liberalism through the recognized judicial system of the Presbyterian church.

Stevenson, in defense of his approach to the church, looked to the Princeton heritage which he thought he exemplified. He emphasized that the toleration which he advocated was "the same in kind and degree which the fathers of the seminary, Dr. Alexander, Miller, and Hodge advocated a hundred years ago."⁷⁰ He referred to the fact that the early Princeton professors were considered moderates in their approach to the method of purifying the church in agreement with the position of the Princeton fathers.

They maintained that every effort to reform the church, or to promote its purity and edification should be made in a constitutional way, i.e., through the medium of regular constitutional judicatories. They referred to Old School men who found it more easy to make sweeping assertions regarding corrupt opinions in the Church, or complain to the General Assembly by signing an Act and Testimony, than to do their duty as members of their respective Presbyteries.⁷¹

Stevenson insisted that Princeton Seminary remain loyal "to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church as enjoined and safeguarded by the General Assembly," and he insisted upon "constitutional methods of government and discipline in dealing with error and corruption within the Presbyterian ministry."⁷² Princeton, as a Presbyterian institution, should find its professors not in opposition to "the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church government."⁷³ Stevenson assumed such a position himself rather than make statements as a representative of Princeton in opposition to the rising tide of liberalism in the denomination. He contended that the president had no sanction to make such statements.⁷⁴

⁷⁰J. Ross Stevenson, "Communication from President Stevenson," *The Presbyterian* 96 (8 July 1926) 6.

⁷¹J. Ross Stevenson, *The Historical Position of Princeton Seminary* (New York: N.p., February, 1928) 10-11.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 12.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁷⁴J. Ross Stevenson, Report to the Board of Directors, 11 November 1925, in Minutes of the Board of Directors, Princeton Theological Seminary, 11 November 1925, Princeton.

In facing charges that he wished to make Princeton into an inclusive seminary reflecting various viewpoints of the church, Stevenson wrote: "As I know in my own mind and heart, I wish to state most emphatically that I do not want such an 'inclusive' seminary at Princeton as would include Modernists, Liberals, or those of whatever name, who are disloyal to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church."⁷⁵ That Stevenson did have concern about liberalism in the church is apparent from his reference to Union Seminary in New York as being a "Seminary for destructive liberalism."⁷⁶

Erdman followed the same approach to the church as Stevenson. He wrote to Armstrong: "my purpose has been and is to be absolutely loyal to our Church Standards in their more conservative interpretation; to abide strictly by constitutional processes in dealing with those whose teachings are not in harmony with these Standards; and further, to faithfully support the Boards and agencies of our Church."⁷⁷ Erdman's attitude toward liberals is a reflection of his interpretation of 2 John 10.

We should note at once, however, that the reference here is to teachers who claim to be official and authoritative, and to such treatment of them as plainly would indicate sympathy with their errors and support their professed efforts to overthrow fundamental truth. John does not forbid ordinary courtesy, he does not encourage impoliteness or churlishness or unkindness or cruelty.⁷⁸

Erdman faced mounting criticism because of his view.

The problem of liberalism in the Presbyterian church confronted all of the faculty members at Princeton. Wilson, Vos, Greene, Armstrong, Hodge, and Allis—men involved in exegetical and doctrinal instruction and, with the exception of Greene, lacking pastoral experience—lent their support to Machen's contention that the church was in great peril and that it was the place of Princeton Seminary to enter the fray on the side of militant orthodoxy. On the other side of the issue was a minority consisting of Stevenson, Erdman, Smith and Loetscher. These men of significant pastoral experience tended to be churchmen who sought solutions to denominational concerns through constitutional procedure. This latter group, concerned with ministering

⁷⁵Stevenson, "Communication from President Stevenson," 6.

⁷⁶*Report of the Special Committee to Visit Princeton Theological Seminary to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.* (Philadelphia: Office of the General Assembly, May, 1927) 57.

⁷⁷Charles R. Erdman to William Park Armstrong, 18 December 1926, Letters concerning Machen, J. Gresham, 1925–1926, Robert E. Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton.

⁷⁸Charles R. Erdman, *The General Epistles: An Exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1919) 194.

to the whole denomination, feared the attitude by the faculty majority which might isolate the seminary from the church. Stevenson voiced this concern to the Board of Directors in 1924.

One hundred and thirty-three students, or sixty per cent of the entire body, belong to the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This is a slight increase over last year, but according to reports which came to us, McCormick, with a smaller total enrollment, has a larger number of Presbyterian students than we have. The number of candidates for the ministry graduating from our Presbyterian colleges varies from year to year, and we naturally expect a fluctuation in the enrollment which we have each year from a particular college. However, we find upon inquiry that Princeton Seminary does not get the proportion of students to which her standing in the theological world entitles her.⁷⁹

This situation may have resulted from Princeton's strong conservative position. Due to its reputation for strict orthodoxy, conservatives from other church bodies were attracted. At the same time, most of the conservatives in the Presbyterian church were not located in the northeast. Other seminaries within the denomination were dividing the evangelical students with Princeton.

Events at Princeton which dramatized for the public the division within the faculty hampered the institution in its endeavor to attract students. The controversy surrounding the ouster of Erdman as faculty adviser to the Student Association, a position he had held since 1907, triggered concern which eventuated in the reorganization of the seminary. Whether in accord with the facts or not, Machen was accused of engineering the removal of Erdman from the office. The print media presented Machen as the leader of a fundamentalist faction which stood in opposition to Erdman.⁸⁰ Though the reports show evidence of being misleading, Machen's stock in the Presbyterian conflict took a tumble from which it would not recover. Samples from the letters addressed to Erdman from self-confessed conservative pastors and leaders contain the following statements:

Personally, I am "sound" in my loyalty to the Confession of Faith—a fundamentalist; but the Lord have mercy on that brand of fundamentalism that cannot endorse you as spiritual adviser to the students of Princeton Seminary.

⁷⁹Princeton Theological Seminary, Minutes of the Board of Directors, Meeting of 14 October 1924.

⁸⁰New York Times, 6 April 1925; Public Ledger (Philadelphia), 6 April 1925; New York Herald Tribune, 6 April 1925; Trenton Evening Times, 7 April 1925, reproduced in *Documents Appended to a Statement by J. Gresham Machen*, ed. by J. Gresham Machen (Princeton: Printed, not published, 23 November 1926) 42–51.

I am very conservative myself but may I never be guilty of an open attack upon one who like yourself stands for the whole truth as contained in the Word of our blessed Lord.

Princeton has always stood for the fundamentals and I know that you have always stood for them too. Most of our Princeton men are fundamentalists at heart. What is dividing the church of today is not the question of doctrine so much but rather the question of Christian charity and Christian Spirit.

I wonder if Machen and the rest realize that they are doing untold harm—dividing the evangelical element in the church as you wrote to Kennedy. Why should orthodoxy have such a trend towards intolerance and Pharisaism? Conservatism without love sours quickly.

Those of us who [sic] are out on the field are truly distressed at the conditions which seem to be so prominent in the Seminary. We are praying that the right attitude will prevail, that the hatred and malice which seem to emanate [sic] from the seminary to flood secular and religious papers will be removed. I have heard no less than a dozen men say that if they had students for ministry they would not know where to send them today—certainly not to Princeton. We are with you in prayer and hope that something definite will come to weld hearts together and to remove the stigma from the beloved institution.⁸¹

A letter to Machen demonstrates a similar concern:

I am writing to make it clear that, if I must choose between the contending groups, I must decide for the one represented by Dr. Stevenson and Dr. Erdman. In aims and motives I rank the groups on an equality. Also, both groups worship the same Christ and hold the same historic facts as basic. But there is no doubt in my mind that the methods of your group are not in accord with a full orb'd Christian faith. Christ's program for us does not include the negative attitude of condemnatory judging and labelling our co-workers but it is His desire that His followers proclaim a positive message for *Him*. This is the program of Dr. Stevenson and Dr. Erdman—hence, I cast my lot with them. No one deprecates more than I, the fact the paganism has, to some extent, been supplanting the Gospel, in some Presbyterian pulpits, but certainly this is not true of any members of the Seminary Faculty. Further, it is my opinion that the way to silence the un-Evangelical voices is not by personal vituperation but by calm prayerful consideration of the matter by our regularly established Church Courts. Let us not be panic stricken and frantic as if God's truth will fail unless we attack in personal ways the ones unfaithful to their ordination vows. God's Truth through God's Spirit is sure to win but remember that the New

⁸¹Letters concerning position as Student Advisor, Robert E. Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton.

Testament blessing of the Spirit is for all Christ's Followers and not for a special few. Why not take Christ at His word and leave this matter to the consensus of judgment of our Spirit guided Presbyters and Commissioners?⁸²

The conflict between Erdman and Machen reached beyond the halls of Princeton. Erdman ran unsuccessfully for the position of moderator of the General Assembly in 1924 but was victorious after being nominated in 1925. Erdman did not have the support of Machen, his colleague. Having to answer once again for his failure to denounce those who backed him from a liberal persuasion, Erdman responded:

I believe in opposing heresy on the part of any one who is troubling the church. I believe that the procedure should be in a kindly spirit and in accordance with the law of the church. If any men of more liberal theological views desire to vote for me, it is, of course, their privilege to do so. The platform on which I stand, however, is that of old-fashioned orthodoxy and Christian spirit and constitutional procedures.⁸³

In spite of this statement, the conservative periodical, *The Presbyterian*, continued to oppose Erdman due to his unwillingness to separate himself publicly from liberal support.⁸⁴

At the General Assembly of 1926, Erdman and Stevenson both spoke against the nomination of Machen to the chair of Apologetics and Christian Ethics at the seminary. The assembly had the responsibility of confirming the nomination. Erdman's words were reported as follows:

I am not speaking with any personal animus. This is not a theological question. Princeton is true to the standards of the Presbyterian Church. Nor is it to be questioned that Dr. Machen has been a defender of the faith. What has been questioned is whether his temper and methods of defense have been such as to qualify him for the particular chair where his whole time will be devoted to the defense of the Christian faith.⁸⁵

Erdman expressed the opinion that debate should not continue on the issue of Machen's appointment since a committee had been formed, at the request of certain members of the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees at Princeton, with the purpose of investigating the problems

⁸²S. Earl Owing to J. Gresham Machen, 14 May 1925, Machen Archives.

⁸³"Dr. Erdman's Statement," *The Presbyterian Banner* 111 (7 May 1925) 5.

⁸⁴Editorial Note to "Is Dr. Erdman Labelled?," *The Presbyterian* 45 (14 May 1925) 12.

⁸⁵New York Herald Tribune, 3 June 1926, cited in *Documents appended to the Statement by J. Gresham Machen*, 101-102.

existent at the seminary. In an unprecedented action the assembly refused to confirm Machen's appointment, choosing to await the report of the committee.

THE INVESTIGATION

The response at Princeton to the organizing of an investigating committee was mixed. Martin, the registrar, is an example of those who looked at the probe as one which would get at the issue and help solve the problem.⁸⁶ Machen, on the other hand, viewed the committee as "purely partisan" and not capable of producing an objective report.⁸⁷

The process of investigation was to include interviews with alumni, faculty, and board members. Alumni interviews revealed various opinions regarding the situation at the seminary. Some thought the problem was the inability of Stevenson to bring harmony and cooperation. Others saw the division as an outgrowth of the conflict between Machen and Erdman. A third opinion placed the blame at the feet of Stevenson and Erdman for their opposition to the will of the majority of the faculty. A fourth perspective was offered by those who concluded that Machen was the source of the trouble.⁸⁸ That the problem was one of faculty dissension is clear.

It seemed to be the consensus of opinion that much of the difficulty in Princeton could be found in the Faculty; that the situation which had developed was greatly to be deplored, because of the effect upon the students, and the unfavorable impression made upon prospective students, who, finding the spirit of contention prevailing, preferred to attend some other seminary. One pastor spoke of three young men of his church, at different times in his ministry, whom he had turned toward Princeton, but who went elsewhere, because of the situation which they found.⁸⁹

Interviews with faculty members substantiated the conclusion of serious disharmony among the faculty. Stevenson testified that there existed "a difference of attitude within the faculty toward the Presbyterian Church of today, toward General Assemblies and their leadership, the Assembly of 1924 excepted, and towards the boards, agencies and enterprises of the Presbyterian Church".⁹⁰ He asked:

But should the faculty on this or any other account take itself seriously and assume the functions of a board of censors, or a board of strategy

⁸⁶Ibid., 104.

⁸⁷J. Gresham Machen to Maitland Alexander, 8 August 1926, Machen Archives.

⁸⁸*Report of the Special Committee to Visit Princeton Theological Seminary*, 5.

⁸⁹Ibid., 5-6.

⁹⁰Ibid., 153.

for the whole Church in general and the Presbyterian Church in particular? This is just what has taken place in Princeton Seminary within the past three years under the active leadership of Dr. Machen. He has made his diagnosis of conditions in the Presbyterian Church and has given it wide publicity, and he has also prescribed a drastic method of treatment as being the Church's only hope.⁹¹

Armstrong, speaking on behalf of the majority of the faculty, stated that they

maintain that the Institution has been historically affiliated with the doctrinal point of view in the Church known as the Old School. They are not aware that the reunion of Old and New Schools required the surrender by the Institution at that time of its doctrinal position and they are unwilling that this position be surrendered now when the differences in the Church are concerned not with two forms of the Reformed Faith but with the very nature of evangelical Christianity itself.⁹²

Included with the statement from Armstrong was a document submitted by C. W. Hodge to the Board of Directors in which he wrote: "In conclusion, I would add, that it thus appears that two entirely opposite attitudes toward truth or doctrine exist here and in the Church at large, so that no peace between them is either possible or desirable."⁹³

Machen expressed his opinion regarding the real issue at Princeton. "It concerns the maintenance of the historic position of Princeton Seminary in the defense of the faith. The majority of the Board of Directors and the majority of the Faculty are in favor of a policy which I think will maintain that position; the President is in favor of a policy which I think will break it down."⁹⁴

Machen did not wish to be understood as passing judgment upon the religious views of Stevenson but was concerned lest the broad approach to the church espoused by the president would serve as "the instrument in breaking down the witness of an institution to that faith."⁹⁵ He restated this point: "I am very far indeed from asserting that Dr. Stevenson is a Modernist; but I am convinced that if his policy prevails, Princeton Seminary will be in a very few years a Modernist institution."⁹⁶

Machen concluded his statement by arguing that, in a day of theological divergence, the faculty majority at Princeton ought to have

⁹¹Ibid., 53.

⁹²Ibid., 68.

⁹³Ibid., 75.

⁹⁴Ibid., 117

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid., 118.

a right to be heard and to continue the instruction which exemplified the heritage of the Old School tradition that belonged to Princeton. In addressing the committee particularly, he said: "Whatever be your own attitude toward our theological and ecclesiastical views, I cannot help hoping that you will hold that our distinctiveness is to be respected even when it is not shared, and that the internal affairs of Princeton Seminary are to be left, of course with the retention of the Assembly's veto power, to the orderly working in the Board of Directors and in the Faculty, of the principle of majority rule."⁹⁷

Allis supported the statements by Armstrong and Machen. He laid the responsibility for the problem in the seminary at the door of the president. He concluded:

It is now, I believe, inescapably plain that the president is determined to carry out his policies in the face of the open opposition of the majority of his Faculty, and furthermore and most important of all, that he is prepared to use every means in his power, especially those means which his position of leadership as the President of the Seminary has placed at his disposal, to undermine their influence and to change this Seminary from its position of strict adherence to the traditions of historic Presbyterianism to one in which all shades of beliefs which are now tolerated within the Church, even though they be clearly out of harmony with its Standards, will be more or less tolerated even if not approved. This policy the majority of the Faculty feel it their duty to resist and oppose.⁹⁸

Smith supported the president and his approach. He defined his position as he defended Stevenson.

I would not have any system of inclusion, which included elements hostile to that system, and the only inclusion I would recognize is the inclusion of all those who hold that system pure and entire, and yet cherish within the limits, certain minor differences of opinion. I differ from my brethren in this respect, that it seems to me is about the position of the President of the Seminary. If this is not his position, and if he is inclined to bring into the Seminary or into the representation of the Seminary in any degree, what we call the liberal or modernistic elements, I should oppose him as heartily as any of my brethren, but because I do not think he holds that position, because I have satisfied myself in public utterance and in private utterance, that his attitude is that which I have been indicating, I have been inclined to support him.⁹⁹

Stevenson declared that Smith had represented him accurately. "If I ever meant the Church would recognize heresy, and men who do not

⁹⁷Ibid., 119.

⁹⁸Ibid., 121.

⁹⁹Ibid., 153.

believe in the authority of the Scriptures, who do not accept the Virgin Birth, if I have ever meant any intimation of that kind, I would make public apology, because I do not hold to anything of that kind."¹⁰⁰

Loetscher raised some pertinent questions in his testimony.

The question, therefore, that has divided us as I see it is this. How far may we go in the exercise of Christian charity toward those who differ with us in regard to the attitude that we ought to take toward matters in public debate? How far does my loyalty to conviction prevent me from exercising Christian charity toward my brother in the ministry?¹⁰¹

Testimonies by members of the boards continued the theme of faculty division and the issues that had caused the cleavage. The committee concluded that one of the factors which was behind the problem was the existence of two boards serving to govern the institution.¹⁰² The Board of Directors was the original governing board. A Board of Trustees was added to maintain the seminary in its legal status in the state of New Jersey. The directors were involved with the faculty and educational direction. The trustees were to deal with financial and corporate matters. The boards, like the faculty, had come to be divided over the issues but their division was not public. The investigating committee proposed reorganization of the seminary under one board of control.¹⁰³ After two years of further debate and publication of views, the reorganization was effected. A new thirty-three man board was to be appointed. Eleven members from each of the existing boards were nominated along with eleven men from outside these boards. Two men chosen, Asa J. Ferry and W. Beatty Jennings, had been signers of the Auburn Affirmation. Machen refused to serve under such a board and left the institution to establish Westminster Theological Seminary. With him went Robert Dick Wilson, Cornelius Van Til, and Oswald T. Allis.

The separation of these men from the faculty was not the wish of the new board. Their absence from the seminary at Princeton cost that institution some of its best young leadership. In 1930, John Murray left Princeton after a year of service and joined the faculty at Westminster. These men represented the areas of Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, and Apologetics. Their defection from Princeton was a severe blow to its future conservative leadership. The question can be raised as to what effect the continued presence of these men at Princeton might have had on a future generation of students. At the

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 161.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 157.

¹⁰²Ibid., 47.

¹⁰³Ibid., 49.

same time it must be admitted that the strict Presbyterianism and separatism espoused by these men made it impossible for them to continue careers there. Lefferts Loetscher concluded: "It was best for both parts of the seminary's tradition that open bifurcation came at last, and that each could develop more fully and consistently its inherent implications unhampered by a really alien tendency."¹⁰⁴

CONCLUSION

The reorganization of Princeton Theological Seminary and the subsequent departure of four professors brought the dawn of a new era for the institution. That reorganization was neither the result of a modernist-conceived plan to capture the seminary nor an inevitable consequence of church reunion. The issue was rather the division among the seminary faculty members over theological curriculum and over the nature and needs of the Presbyterian church. This division resulted in the loss of students as well as pastoral support. The situation cried out for a resolution that evangelical men were unable and/or unwilling to achieve.

The Princeton story serves as an example to evangelical colleges and seminaries. Men and women who are in agreement on essential doctrinal matters and confessional statements must avoid polarization and disharmony which can result when issues are not resolved in the spirit of unity, peace, and love.

¹⁰⁴Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 147.

WOMAN'S DESIRE FOR MAN: GENESIS 3:16 RECONSIDERED

IRVIN A. BUSENITZ

Lexical and etymological studies of the words of Gen 3:16b yield little help for interpreting the meaning of the woman's desire for man. Contextual evidence, however, indicates that the woman's desire for the man and his rule over her are not the punishment but the conditions in which the woman will suffer punishment. Although there are linguistic and thematic parallels between Gen 3:16b and Gen 4:7, contextual differences and interpretive problems indicate that Gen 4:7 cannot be used to interpret the meaning of "desire" in Gen 3:16. Cant 7:10[11] provides a better context for understanding the word. It may be concluded that, in spite of the Fall, the woman will have a longing for intimacy with man involving more than sexual intimacy.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH in the past few decades there has been a proliferation of books and articles discussing biblical norms for the role of women both in society and in the church, a consensus of interpretation has not emerged. The complexity of the issue, coupled with the exegetical difficulty of relevant Scripture, has made general agreement elusive. Part of the discussion has focused upon the last phrase of Gen 3:16: "yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."¹

Various interpretations have been propounded for the meaning of this phrase, centering primarily around the definition of "desire." One prominent interpretation suggests that, as a punishment for the Fall, a woman's desire will be subject to her husband's. "Her desire, whatever it may be, will not be her own. She cannot do what she wishes, for her husband rules over her like a despot and whatever she wishes is subject

¹All biblical quotations from *NASB* unless otherwise noted.

to his will."² Another viewpoint contends that the woman will have an immense longing, yearning, and psychological dependence.³ More recently a third view has surfaced. It suggests that, based on the usage of "desire" in Gen 4:7, the woman will desire to dominate the relationship with her husband. "The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her, if he can."⁴

LEXICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Hebrew term rendered "desire" is תַּשׁוּקָה and is derived from תִּשְׁקוּ. It is given the general lexical meaning of "attract, impel, of desire, affection";⁵ however, due to its infrequent occurrence in the OT (Gen 3:16; 4:7; Cant 7:10[11]),⁶ the semantic range is unclear. The etymological data is equally obscure. The word may be related historically to the Arabic *šāqa* (which is often used in contexts indicating sexual desire) or *sāqa* (which is used in a more general sense of desire).⁷ Nevertheless, *šāqa* does not demand sexual connotations and *sāqa* does not rule them out.⁸ In light of its usage in Gen 4:7, the term appears to have a meaning which is broader than sexual desire.

Perhaps the translators of the LXX attempted to clarify their understanding of the term by translating it with ἀποστροφή in Gen 3:16 and 4:7, but with ἐπιστροφή in Cant 7:10[11]. The preposition ἀπό, when attached to the verb στρέφω, suggests "to turn away," while ἐπί suggests "to turn toward." However, it is difficult to understand

²E. J. Young, *Genesis 3* (London: Banner of Truth, 1966) 127; cf. John Calvin, *Genesis* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 172, who contends that 3:16b is an example of Hebrew poetry in which a thought is restated in a subsequent phrase. As such, "and he shall rule over you" is a reassertion of "your desire shall be to your husband."

³Gini Andrews, *Your Half of the Apple* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972) 51; cf. H. C. Leupold, *Genesis* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977) 1. 172.

⁴Susan Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire?" *WTJ* 37 (1975) 382; cf. also Foh's *Women and the Word of God* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) 69.

⁵BDB, 1003. The definition given by Koehler and Baumgartner (KB, 1. 1043) is similar: "impulse, urge."

⁶The significance of the term as used in these three passages is treated below. The number in brackets refers to the versification of the Hebrew text.

⁷Foh (*Women*, 67) seeks to remove any sexual connotation from "desire" in 3:16b by contending that "the phonemic equivalent of the Hebrew ש [שׁ of תַּשׁוּקָה] is s in Arabic. The proper etymology in Arabic for תַּשׁוּקָה is *sāqa*, to urge or drive on. This meaning need not have sexual connotations."

⁸In either case, etymology is often of little help in ascertaining meaning, which is determined by context and usage.

how Gen 4:7 could embody any idea of "turning away."⁹ Furthermore, the terms are virtually synonymous in meaning in noun form,¹⁰ so that the change in prepositional prefix is "unconvincing"¹¹ as an interpretation and "quite unnecessary."¹²

The *Tg. Onq.* translates the term with תִּאֲוֶהֱתִיךָ, which means "to desire, long for." While it does not occur in the Aramaic portions of the OT, its Hebrew equivalent is recorded in Ps 119:20: "My soul is crushed with longing [תִּאֲוֶהֱתִיךָ] after Thine ordinances at all times."

The other terms used in Gen 3:16 are even less helpful (when treated individually) for determining the meaning of the text. The verb "to rule," from קָשַׁל, is employed both here and in 4:7. The LXX translates the term in 3:16 with κυριεύω, which means "to lord it over,"¹³ but uses a verb form of ἄρχω ("to rule over")¹⁴ in 4:7, possibly to depict a more governmental, autocratic concept. Similarly, little significance can be attached to the interchange of the prepositions אֶל (3:16; 4:7) and עַל (Cant 7:10[11]). The Hebrew language frequently employs the two prepositions interchangeably, with apparent indiscrimination.¹⁵

Ultimately, the effort to achieve exegetical clarity cannot be propelled by lexical or etymological information, for the data revealed

⁹The same should be said of Gen 3:16 also, for even understanding תִּשְׁוֶקָה to mean a desire for domination and control does not essentially incorporate a "turning away" concept.

¹⁰The meaning assigned to both terms in BAGD (100, 301) is "to turn toward."

¹¹John Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969) 83.

¹²U. Cassuto, *The Book of Genesis* (2 vols; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1978) 1.166.

¹³Some have contended that κυριεύω connotes the idea of establishing one in an office over another. If this were true it would suggest that the husband was not installed in the "office" of leader/headship until after the Fall. Yet 1 Tim 2:12-14 implies that the role of headship was divinely ordained prior to the fall. Equally untenable is the following analysis: "This is obviously neither an intensification nor a warping of a pre-existing hierarchy between the sexes for no such hierarchy is alluded to" (Victor P. Hamilton, "שָׁקֵק," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Bruce K. Waltke, and Gleason L. Archer, Jr. [2 vols; Chicago: Moody, 1980] 20 913). While Genesis 1-3 does not specifically refer to a preexisting hierarchy, it is alluded to in a multiplicity of ways in the opening chapters. Examples include the purpose of woman's creation (2:18) and the naming of woman (2:23). Furthermore, it is specifically stated elsewhere in Scripture that a hierarchical structure between man and woman antedated the Fall (1 Tim 2:12-14; 1 Cor 11:3-12).

¹⁴BAGD, 113.

¹⁵Cf. BDB, 41. Numerous examples of this interchange exist in the OT (e.g., 1 Sam 1:10, 26; 1 Sam 25:25). While the "physical motion toward" idea of אֶל can also encompass the concept of "against," as it does in Gen 4:8, it is made evident only by the context. Since such a thought is not inherent in the context of 3:16, one should not be too quick to read the idea of "against" back into it.

by such is dim and inconclusive. Lexically and etymologically, the term שוק is shrouded in obscurity; the verb מָשַׁל and the prepositions אֶף and עַל are equally impotent to unlock the meaning of Gen 3:16.

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

While the study of each of the terms does not shed much light on the meaning of Gen 3:16, the context does. In Gen 3:15 the mention of woman serves as a point of transition to v 16 where the Lord pronounces judgment upon the woman. A similar connection is provided between v 16 and v 17; the mention of the husband in v 16b allows for a smooth transition to the judgment pronounced upon the man in vv 17–19.

The first thing to be noted by the context is the fact that each recipient of God's judgment receives one punishment. In the case of the serpent (3:14), he would move on his belly: similarly, Satan (3:15) receives one judgment—a death blow administered by the seed of the woman.¹⁶ In the judgment upon man (3:17–19), the ground will not readily yield its fruit. In Gen 4:11, Cain too is the recipient of only one punishment. Consequently, in 3:16 woman is probably the recipient of only one judgment.

Second, in each of the judgments which God pronounced in Gen 3:14–19 and 4:11–12, the nature of the curse has no essential relationship to the nature of the sin committed. The ground not readily yielding its fruit has no essential relationship to Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit; the fact that the serpent would now crawl on the ground has no integral connection to his enticing conversation with the woman. Consequently, one should not assume that the woman's punishment is to be sealed forever under the control of her husband, because she stepped out of her divinely ordained role of submission and followed the admonition of the devil.

Third, the judgments given to the woman and the man (3:16–19) revolve around propagation and seed.¹⁷ "Both sentences involve

¹⁶This argument follows the view that Satan is being addressed in v 15. It is doubtful that the term "enmity" (אֵי־קָה) can be limited merely to a hostility between man and beast, for elsewhere the term is employed only of enmity between morally responsible agents (cf. Num 35:21, 22; Ezek 25:15; 35:5). Furthermore, if the v 15 judgment refers to the serpent, then it is essentially no judgment at all, for animals in general exist under a similar relationship with man.

¹⁷The opening statement of 3:16: "I will greatly multiply your pain and your conception" is probably a hendiadys—an idiomatic phrase referring to pain which results from pregnancy. In addition to the fact that it is doubtful if an increased fertility cycle would constitute a punishment, the next phrase combines the two thoughts: "in pain you shall bring forth children." Cf. Cassuto's suggestion (*Genesis*, I. 165) that "a better interpretation is: your suffering in general, and more particularly that of your childbearing."

pain/toil, and both affect the bringing forth of life, human and otherwise."¹⁸ The context speaks not of the desire of woman to rule the man but of the continuation of life in the face of death. Such is the central element of 3:16a. Such is the focal point of 3:17–19. Thus, there is good cause to believe that the same idea is present in 3:16b.

Fourth, in the contextual development of Genesis 3 the woman is specifically addressed in 3:16, while the man is the object of God's pronouncement of judgment in 3:17–19. If the "desire" of 3:16b is the desire of the woman to control and dominate her husband, then the sentence is no longer a judgment upon the woman; rather, it is the man who bears its brunt. Yet man's judgment is not mentioned until 3:17. "Since the punishment was specifically intended for the woman and her female descendants, and was not a penalty shared with the men, it had inevitably to be of a nature restricted to the female sex."¹⁹

Fifth, in each of the punishments the pronouncement is given first, then an explanatory statement follows. In the case of the serpent (3:14) the explanatory phrase is "And dust you shall eat all the days of your life." Serpents are not dust-eaters per se; rather, the phrase is an explanatory elaboration of the fact that they would crawl around on their bellies. In 3:15 the punishment is essentially enunciated in the phrase "And I will put enmity between your seed and her seed," with the subsequent phrase denoting the extent of that enmity, namely, death. In 3:17–19 the punishment directed toward Adam is the cursing of the ground (3:17a); 3:17b–19 is explanatory, describing how this punishment would affect Adam and his descendants.²⁰ The same is true in 3:16; the last phrase must be closely related contextually to the punishment recorded in 3:16a. Since each of the explanatory statements in 3:14, 3:15, and 3:17–19 is inseparably linked to the judgment statement, it would be exegetically inadvisable to divide 3:16 into two separate, unrelated punishments. Rather, 3:16b is elaborating on 3:16a. The "desire factor" is not a part of the judgment but an explanation of conditions and relationships as they will exist after the Fall. Even though the intimacy between the first man and his wife was abrogated,²¹

¹⁸Foh, *Women*, 67. The judgment of both the woman and the man affects their physical being. For the woman, pregnancy and childbirth will be accompanied by great hardship and toil. The judgment on man will also involve hard labor (note the same word [עָבַד = pain] used in both 3:16 and 3:17).

¹⁹Cassuto, *Genesis*, 1. 164.

²⁰Cf. Gen 4:11–12 where the punishment of Cain is a further cursing of the ground (4:11), while the statement that he would be a vagrant and wanderer on the earth (4:12) is an explanation of the judgment, describing the extent and impact of it.

²¹God's words in Gen 3:16b do not "destroy the harmony of marriage" (Foh, "Woman's Desire," 383), for such harmony was broken earlier (cf. "his wife" of 2:24, 25; 3:8 with "the woman" and the phrase, "which You gave to me, she gave . . ." in 3:12). Though Eve is later called "his wife," the initial intimacy appears to be gone.

even though the unity with man would bring woman to the threshold of death itself in the process of childbirth, yet woman would still possess a strong desire to be with man. The broken intimacy and the pain in childbearing would not be allowed to nullify the yearning of woman for man and the fulfillment of God's command to populate the earth²² or to alter the divine order of the headship of man.

It is equally tenuous to maintain that the phrase "and he shall rule over you" was given because Eve had usurped the authority and leadership role of Adam when she took and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The sin of the first woman was not that she took the lead without seeking the prior counsel of Adam. No such prior consultation was needed, for she herself knew God's commandment prohibiting them from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:17). The woman's sin was that she exalted herself above her Creator. She took it upon herself to determine, together with the counsel of the serpent, if God's law was good or bad, if it was right or wrong. Her sin had nothing to do with denying Adam his rightful role of leadership in their marriage or with grasping a role that belonged to her husband. The only role that Eve usurped was that of God's, a usurpation that is characteristic of all acts of sin of all people living in all times of the history of mankind.

Woman may desire to dominate or rule over man, but it is not a part of the punishment pronounced upon woman; it is just the essence, character, and result of all sin against God. Self-exaltation and pride always result in the desire to dominate and rule. Every person to some extent desires to dominate and rule over others—not just woman over man.²³

GENESIS 4:7

One of the two passages most directly related to this discussion is Gen 4:7. While there are linguistic and thematic parallels between this verse and Gen 3:16, there are also differences. Furthermore, the

²²This element should not be dismissed too readily, for there is every reason to believe that the broken intimacy, together with the deadly pain of childbirth, would be sufficient to place the command to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth (1:28) in jeopardy (cf. also Gen 11:4, 9).

²³The NT commands to submit to the husband's authority (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:1) do not suggest that woman's desire to rule over man is a part of the Genesis 3 judgment. These passages incorporate admonitions directing slaves to submit to their masters, children to obey their parents, and younger men to submit to their elders, indicating that nonsubmissive attitudes and actions are the result of sin. To be certain, women may seek to usurp authority not rightfully theirs. But it is an action which is the consequence of sin and not a result of the judgment of Gen 3:16.

interpretation of Gen 4:7 faces unique difficulties all its own.²⁴ Generally speaking, there have been two interpretations. The less common interpretation posits Abel as the antecedent of תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ ("his desire"), suggesting that if Cain does what is right, then he will be lifted up and restored to his position of preeminence which formed a part of his birthright as the older brother.²⁵ "From the latter clause of the verse it is evident that God alludes to the prerogatives of the birthright which Cain would be in no danger of losing if his conduct were such as it ought to be."²⁶ This interpretation embodies at least two favorable aspects. The first is contextual, for it readily accounts for the actions of Cain toward Abel in the following verse.²⁷ The second is grammatical, for in תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ ("his desire") the pronominal suffix is masculine. If the antecedent were "sin [חַטָּאת] crouching at the door," one would expect a feminine pronominal suffix, since חַטָּאת is feminine.

A more common understanding of Gen 4:7 is that sin, pictured as a wild beast, is waiting to pounce upon and control its victim. "The fem. חַטָּאת is construed as a masculine, because sin is personified as a wild beast, lurking at the door of the human heart, and eagerly desiring to devour his soul (1 Pet. v.8)."²⁸ This view benefits from the closeness of the pronominal suffix ("his desire") to the antecedent ("sin crouching at the door"); yet, despite the personification of sin as a wild beast, it suffers from the discord of gender.

Regardless of which view one espouses, neither is sufficiently certain to allow it to become the basis for establishing the meaning of תְּשׁוּקָה in Gen 3:16. It is readily admitted that there are some noteworthy similarities between Gen 4:7 and Gen 3:16. Both are given in a context of divine judgment. Both come from the hand of the same writer. Both employ similar terminology.²⁹ It is true that "the proximity of Genesis 4:7 to Genesis 3:16 suggests that a similar grammatical construction

²⁴Many commentators readily admit that the verse is one of the most difficult in all of the OT to explicate. Skinner (*Genesis*, 107) has observed: "Every attempt to extract a meaning from the verse is more or less of a *tour de force*, and it is nearly certain that the obscurity is due to deep-seated textual corruptions." Suggested textual emendations are feeble at best and have generated little light.

²⁵The term תְּשׁוּקָה ("lifted up") is used in Gen 49:3 in the sense of "preeminence." In this view "desire" would mean "to be subservient to" as to the firstborn of the family (cf. Gen 27:29).

²⁶George Bush, *Notes on Genesis* (2 vols; reprinted, Minneapolis: James and Klock, 1976) I. 99.

²⁷The disaffectionate relationship which developed between Esau and Jacob over the matter of birthright (Genesis 27) is significantly analogous.

²⁸C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Genesis* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 112.

²⁹ Gen 3:16:	יְקַשְׁלֵיכָּךְ	וְהָיָה	תְּשׁוּקַתְךָ	וְאָל־אִישְׁךָ
Gen 4:7:	תְּקַשְׁלֵיבוֹ	וְאָתָה	תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ	וְאָלֶיךָ

would have similar meaning.”³⁰ But since Gen 4:7 is besieged with interpretive uncertainties, it ought not to be applied unreservedly to interpret Gen 3:16.

Furthermore, Gen 4:7 is not as parallel to Gen 3:16 as it may appear. First of all, Gen 4:7 is figurative while Gen 3:16 is literal. Hermeneutically, one should proceed from the literal usage to the figurative usage if one’s exegesis is to have validity.³¹ Second, while the grammatical construction is similar, the two phrases are actually inverted in sense. In 4:7 the object of the desire (Cain) is also the recipient of the curse. However, in 3:16 the object of the desire (the man) is not the recipient of the curse. For 3:16 to be truly parallel with 4:7, the desire of woman would have to be part of the judgment against the man. Third, similarity in grammar need not demand similarity of meaning. Verbal parallelism may be only coincidental. As shown above, the context of Gen 3:16 does not indicate that the woman desires to dominate her husband. If it is to be found in Gen 3:16, it must be imported from Gen 4:7. However, the context of Genesis 3 must be given the primary role in determining the meaning of “desire” in 3:16 rather than the linguistic resemblance between 3:16 and 4:7.

The thematic links between Genesis 2–3 and Genesis 4³² neither suggest nor imply that, as a part of the judgment of Gen 3:16, woman will desire to dominate man. For example, in Genesis 2–3 there is intimacy between God and man; then sin turns that intimacy to alienation. There is intimacy between man and woman; then sin causes intimacy to become alienation. In Genesis 4, intimacy between God and Cain turns to alienation, and intimacy between Cain and Abel turns to alienation. But in each case the broken intimacy, alienation, and punishment are not allowed to go beyond God’s intended extent.³³ In the example of Cain, his death would be strongly avenged (Gen 4:15). The thematic relationship suggests that such is the case in Gen 3:16b. The alienation between man and woman and the pain of childbirth resulting from intimacy, would not be allowed to interrupt woman’s desire for man, man’s rulership over woman, or the carrying out of the command to populate the earth (Gen 1:28).

CANTICLES 7:10[11]

Cant 7:10[11] contains the third occurrence of the word שׁוּק: “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me.” While the meaning of שׁוּק may

³⁰Foh, *Women*, 69.

³¹It is difficult to perceive how one could determine how sin desires Cain and then utilize that as the basis for determining how woman desires man.

³²Cf. Alan J. Hauser, “Linguistic and Thematic Links Between Genesis 4:1–6 and Genesis 2–3,” *JETS* 23 (1980) 297–305.

³³Scripture is replete with instances of divinely established parameters in the punishment of mankind (cf., e.g., Exod 20:25; 21:23–25).

be difficult to determine precisely in its two previous occurrences, there is little doubt here. It speaks clearly of the natural power and compulsion of the love of an individual for another. The slightest hint of one desiring to dominate the other is totally absent. Says Zöckler: "תִּשְׁקָה as in Gen. iii.16, the passage which lies at the basis of this, [speaks] of the longing desire of the man for the society of his wife, not of gross sensual desires for sexual intercourse. The whole is a triumphant exclamation in which Shulamith joyfully affirms that her lover cannot exist without her."³⁴

It appears that the usage of שִׁיק in Canticles is closer to that of Gen 3:16 than is Gen 4:7, notwithstanding the latter's grammatical similarities and textual proximity. First of all, the plain must be employed to interpret the obscure and difficult if there are contextual reasons to believe that both usages are similar. Such is the case between Gen 3:16 and Cant 7:10[11]. The abundantly clear meaning of "desire" in Cant 7:10[11] should be given priority in the determination of the meaning of "desire" in Gen 3:16. Second, "desire" is used literally in Cant 7:10[11], just as it is in Gen 3:16; in Gen 4:7 the usage is figurative.³⁵ Third, in distinction from Gen 4:7, both Cant 7:10[11] and Gen 3:16 address relationships between the opposite sexes. As such Cant 7:10[11] and Gen 3:16 share a contextual relationship which is foreign to Gen 4:7.

The true difficulty, then, is not understanding the meaning of "desire" as used in Cant 7:10[11] and Gen 3:16, but as it is used in Gen 4:7. This is noted indirectly by Skinner in his comment on Gen 4:7: "The word תִּשְׁקָה is unsuitable, whether it be understood of the wild beast's eagerness for its prey or the deference due from a younger brother to an older."³⁶ The reason שִׁיק is so unsuitable is because the other two usages speak of the power of attraction between the sexes. To grant Gen 4:7 in its obscurity a determinative role in the interpretation of Gen 3:16 without permitting the clarity of Cant 7:10[11] to permeate the exegetical process is to abandon hermeneutical discernment and propriety.

CONCLUSION

The central consideration in the interpretation of Gen 3:16b is context; the meaning of "desire" is best determined in the light of its

³⁴Otto Zöckler, *The Song of Solomon in Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, by J. P. Lange (tr. & ed. by Philip Schaff; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.) 119. The rendering "I am my beloved's, and it is an obligation upon me to desire him" is grammatically permissible, especially in light of a similar poetical use of עָלַי in Prov 7:14. However, it is doubtful on contextual grounds, for elsewhere the phrase "I am my beloved's" (6:3; cf. 2:16) connotes reciprocity.

³⁵Cf. BDB, 1003.

³⁶Skinner, *Genesis*, 107.

immediate contextual setting. The context bespeaks procreation and the continuation of life, not the desire to dominate. Furthermore, to appeal to Gen 4:7 with its manifold obscurities to unlock the interpretive door of Gen 3:16 is to throw exegetical caution to the wind. It is much safer to apply the meaning of תְּשׁוּקָה in Cant 7:10[11] to Gen 3:16, for while it does not enjoy the near proximity of Gen 4:7, its meaning is plain and its interpretation is virtually unquestioned. Consequently, it should be granted preeminence over Gen 4:7 and become the primary cross-reference in ascertaining the meaning of "desire."

The text does not sustain the interpretation that one aspect of the woman's judgment is that she will desire to dominate and control the man. The last phrase of Gen 3:16 is not a part of the judgment; it is an explanation and description of conditions which will exist after the fall. Thus, the last phrase could be translated: "yet you will still desire [as you did before the Fall, though now tainted by sin] your husband, and he will still rule [as he did before the Fall, though now tainted by sin] over you." The alienation, broken intimacy, and pain in childbirth resulting from the Fall will not be allowed to annul that desire nor abrogate the command to be fruitful.

In spite of the fact that man will rule over woman, and in spite of the fact that intimacy may result in the pain (and possible death) due to childbirth, yet woman will desire and yearn for man. The issue is broader than purely sexual but does not exclude the sexual element. This interpretation does not imply that woman's sexual drives are stronger than the man's. While it is generally concluded that the man has the stronger sexual desire, such is to be expected, for there was nothing in the judgment upon man to temper it. On the other hand, the woman must deal with the pain of childbirth; thus it is to be expected that the woman's sexual desires would be somewhat moderated. Nevertheless, woman's desire for man is an attraction which cannot be uprooted from her nature. The contention that "sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband"³⁷ is unquestionably true. But it is a natural consequence of sin, not a result of God's judgment on the woman in Gen 3:16! Just as the sin-corrupted headship of the husband is not a part of the divine judgment upon the man but a consequence of sin, so the sin-corrupted submission of the wife is not a part of the judgment; it is the result of sin.³⁸

³⁷Foh, *Women*, 69.

³⁸While some may contend that the women's liberation movement of recent years does not corroborate this interpretation (Foh, *Women*, 67), the opposite may actually be the case. Many of the women who speak out strongly against the headship of man nevertheless do get married and do bear their husband's children. Certainly it cannot be maintained that this interpretation is contrary to the broader historical perspective.

THE "FULLER MEANING" OF SCRIPTURE: A HERMENEUTICAL QUESTION FOR EVANGELICALS

JACK R. RIGGS

A brief review of the sensus plenior debate in Roman Catholic circles lays a foundation for understanding a similar debate among evangelicals and raises pertinent questions. The debate conducted among evangelicals focuses attention on the need for careful exegesis of Scripture passages (such as Dan 8:16, 19; 12:8; 1 Pet 1:10-12; and John 11:49-52) as well as the need to reexamine the NT use of the OT (e.g., the use to which Matthew puts Psalms 22 and 69). Furthermore, the evangelical debate points out the need to think through the implications of sensus plenior for such key doctrines as biblical infallibility and biblical inerrancy. A final issue raised by the debate concerns the reliability of the grammatical-historical method of hermeneutics as applied to the biblical text.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

EVANGELICAL scholars are aware of the hermeneutical debates that are taking place both without and within evangelicalism. Biblical interpretation is an essential field of study in theological science because it attempts to answer the question: "What did God and, for that matter, the human authors mean by what they said in the Bible?" One question of recent concern for evangelicals has been over the proposed *sensus plenior* or "fuller meaning" of certain Scriptures found in the OT. The purpose of this article is to discuss two alternative answers of evangelicals to the question, "Is there a fuller meaning to Scripture?" The one view is an affirmative response. The other view is a negative response to the question in that it affirms a single meaning for all the texts of Scripture. To prepare for the discussion of these two views, there will be a brief review of the background and the discussion of the idea of a fuller meaning to

Scripture in Roman Catholic thought, since the idea seems to have developed first within that theological tradition.

ROMAN CATHOLIC BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The first use of the term *sensus plenior* as a label to classify a meaning of Scripture was by Father Andrea Fernandez in the late 1920s. His idea was not unheralded, for around the turn of this century there were Catholic scholars who suggested a sense to Scripture very close to the concept of *sensus plenior*.

Fernandez suggested that God had expressed through the words of Scripture a deeper meaning than that which the human writers understood and intended. This hidden meaning is a fuller development of the literal meaning of Scripture. It is found especially in OT prophecies, but there are also certain Christian doctrines insinuated in the OT which have their fuller meanings in the NT.¹

The *sensus plenior* concept has received great attention in Catholic biblical periodicals since the end of the Second World War. Raymond Brown has been probably the leading spokesman for the idea in Catholic scholarship. His definition of *sensus plenior* is much like Fernandez's. He has defined it as

the deeper meaning, intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, that is seen to exist in the words of Scripture when they are studied in the light of further revelation or of development in the understanding of revelation.²

Brown considers the fuller meaning to be a part of the literal meaning of the words of Scripture and therefore distinct from any typical sense.³ While the literal meaning is the meaning directly intended by the human author and conveyed by his words, this does not exclude any ramifications that his words may have taken on in the larger context of the Bible.⁴ These later ramifications are the "plus-value" of the literal meaning of the author's words, which "plus-value" was unknown to the author.⁵

The use of grammatical-historical exegesis determines the meaning of an author's message for his time. But such exegesis does not exhaust

¹Raymond E. Brown, "The History and Development of the Theory of a *Sensus Plenior*," *CBQ* 15 (1953) 142.

²Raymond E. Brown, "Hermeneutics," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968) 161.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 607.

⁵Raymond E. Brown, "The *Sensus Plenior* in the Last Ten Years," *CBQ* 25 (1963) 267.

the real and fuller meaning of certain texts, since God had intended something more, according to Brown.⁶ The determination of the *sensus plenior* is either through further divine revelation in Scripture or through the development of the understanding of divine revelation by the Church.⁷

Discussions have taken place among Catholic theologians who adhere to the *sensus plenior*, but who do not agree on all points of the argument. The discussions on certain questions are pertinent to evangelicals, for these questions must also be treated in the evangelical debate. One question is whether or not a passage can possess a fuller sense if the human author was unaware of that fuller sense.⁸ The issue here is, "can an author function truly as an author if he is unconscious of a fuller meaning of his words?" A second question is whether or not the *sensus plenior* is merely a literal sense to Scripture, or in actuality a second sense to the literal meaning.⁹ A third question centers upon the distinction between a fuller meaning and the typical sense of a passage.¹⁰ Is there a clear-cut difference between the two? A fourth question concerns the range of *sensus plenior*. Is *sensus plenior* limited to just the OT/NT relationship, or is there a real *sensus plenior* of OT texts discovered at a later state of the OT, as well as a real *sensus plenior* of NT texts discovered later by the church?¹¹

The questions prompted by Catholic biblical interpreters who are opposed to the idea of a *sensus plenior* to Scripture are also very pertinent to the discussion among evangelicals, due to the issues raised. Rudolph Bierberg, for example, opposed the fuller meaning from the theological perspective of inspiration.¹² For Bierberg, what might go beyond the understanding and intention of the human author is not inspired. Both God and men are the true authors of Scripture, with God as the principal author and the human authors as God's instruments. When the Scriptures were written, God limited the expression of His thought to the character and capacities of the human agent. Therefore, what God intended, the human author intended. The literal meaning is the intended meaning of the divine and human authors. If the *sensus plenior* is the literal meaning of the text, then there is no reason to designate it fuller. If the *sensus plenior* is an extension of meaning beyond the intent of the human author, then it is a new

⁶Brown, "Hermeneutics," 618.

⁷Ibid., 616.

⁸Brown, "The History and Development of the Theory of a *Sensus Plenior*," 145.

⁹Ibid., 147.

¹⁰Ibid., 153.

¹¹Brown, "The *Sensus Plenior* in the Last Ten Years," 271-73.

¹²Rudolph Bierberg, "Does Sacred Scripture Have A *Sensus Plenior*?" *CBQ* 10 (1948) 185-88.

concept and a different meaning, rather than a fuller meaning, and not the effect of the inspiration of a text.

Bierberg also opposed the *sensus plenior* on the theological grounds of divine revelation.¹³ When God revealed his truths, he intended them in their fullest sense which was the literal meaning of the words which the inspired writers used. The human author in any single passage was only quoting God and intended what God intended.

Catholic scholars opposed to *sensus plenior* argue that what interpreters are dealing with is actually fuller understanding rather than a fuller meaning of earlier texts. Bruce Vawter illustrated this by pointing out that one ought not to refer to the God of the NT as a fuller sense of the God who revealed himself to Amos or Isaiah. While men have more knowledge about him than those prophets, he is the same God. There is nothing inadequate in the meaning or sense of the words about God which come from the OT.¹⁴

Thus a glance at certain debates in Catholic hermeneutics suggests that there are lively differences regarding the idea of the *sensus plenior*. The historical development of the idea in the Catholic tradition along with the debate that has ensued provides a very important background, while raising questions pertinent to the evangelical discussion.

THE FULLER MEANING VIEW AS HELD BY EVANGELICALS

The hermeneutical idea of a *sensus plenior* to certain passages of Scripture is not the sole possession of the Catholic Church. Some evangelicals do see a meaning which is deeper or fuller in certain passages of the OT than the literal meaning. Their argument is basically that since God is ultimately the author of Scripture, it is his intention primarily that should be sought, and not the human author's. This is Philip Payne's point who has written that

in spite of the crucial role the human authors' intention has for the meaning of a text his conscious intention does not necessarily *exhaust* the meaning of his statements, especially in more poetic and predictive writings. Ultimately God is the author of Scripture, and it is his intention alone that exhaustively restricts the meaning of the text to what he feels can be demonstrated to be the intention of the human author.¹⁵

God, therefore, could have revealed more through the words of a writer of Scripture than the writer fully understood. This appears to be the case in some passages.

¹³Ibid., 191.

¹⁴Bruce Vawter, "The Fuller Sense: Some Considerations," *CBQ* 26 (1964) 92.

¹⁵Philip B. Payne, "The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with the Human Author's Intention," *JETS* 20 (1977) 243.

Payne's argument is that it is impossible to know for sure how much of an author's intention was based upon a conscious choice of words, since subconscious thought and perception are characteristic of human language. In the case of the biblical writers, their intentions are accessible only in their texts that have survived their times. We do not have access to them to inquire of them what their thoughts may have been at the time of writing. Hence it is difficult if not impossible to ascertain exactly what the intentions of a biblical author were. Error comes when *intention* is defined as "the author's conscious understanding of the full meaning of his words at the time he wrote." An author may have written something that carried a meaning that he would later acknowledge and approve, even though that meaning had been only in his subconscious mind when he wrote. Since the Holy Spirit's influence was not something arising from the mental framework of the speaker, the Spirit's influence cannot be included necessarily as part of the author's intention. Consequently, at least in some prophecies the prophet was not cognizant of the import of his words. Thus for Payne, the full meaning of the prophecy was simply not part of the author's intention.¹⁶

An interpreter can know when God has intended a fuller meaning of the text of an OT passage through the further revelation of the NT, according to evangelical proponents of *sensus plenior*. To be aware of a fuller meaning is to realize that there is an additional sense to an OT passage than was consciously apparent to the human author himself, and more meaning than can be gained through grammatical-historical exegesis. The exegete can see this only in retrospect through the light of the NT. Donald Hagner has summarized this concept as follows:

This phenomenon occurs frequently in the New Testament, and however one chooses to describe it, one is faced with the perception of a deeper, more significant meaning or a fuller sense contained within and alongside the primary or contemporary meaning. . . . It is this fuller sense that the New Testament writers are alive to as they produce their writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

The grammatical-historical method, therefore, does not yield the full meaning of certain OT texts where a *sensus plenior* is involved. William S. LaSor called attention to this apparent hermeneutical paradox when he wrote, "This grammatico-historical method, we have seen, has sometimes failed to yield a spiritual meaning. Where does this

¹⁶Ibid., 245-51.

¹⁷Donald A. Hagner, "When the Time Had Fully Come," in *Dreams, Visions and Oracles*, ed. Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977) 91.

leave us in our quest for the meaning in the Word of God?"¹⁸ LaSor explained further that the application of the fuller meaning principle to Scripture was not a substitute for grammatical-historical exegesis, but a development from such exegesis. It is not eisegesis but rather a reading from the text of the fullness of meaning required by the total context of divine revelation. While the human author did not intend to say all that can be found in the fuller meaning, yet the Holy Spirit led him to express God's Word in such ways that the fuller meaning was not lost.¹⁹

J. I. Packer also views the *sensus plenior* as something texts acquire from an extrapolation of the grammatical-historical method. For Packer, the first task is always to get into the writer's mind by grammatical-historical exegesis. What the author meant, God meant. But God's fuller meaning, which can be known through further revelation, is the extension, development, and application of what the writer was consciously expressing.²⁰

There are several arguments used to support the *sensus plenior* idea in the interpretation of Scripture.²¹ One argument is that the OT prophets did at times speak things which they did not understand, according to 1 Pet 1:10-12, where Peter wrote that the prophets searched diligently "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." In the testimony of Daniel is another Scripture which seems to indicate that he did not understand the meaning of prophetic revelation which had been given to him when he said: "I heard, but I understood not" (Dan 12:8). A second argument is that there were occasions when prophecies were not understood by the contemporaries of the prophets. Daniel is again used as support for this in his statement in Dan 8:27 that not only was he astonished at the divine vision given to him, "but none understood it." A final argument is predicated on the case of Caiaphas who predicted the death of Jesus without being aware that his advice to the Jewish council that Jesus' death would be expedient carried prophetic force (John 11:49-52). The point is that when Caiaphas prophesied he spoke beyond what he knew or understood. This was probably true also in some instances of prophetic revelation in the OT.

¹⁸William Sanford LaSor, "The *Sensus Plenior* and Biblical Interpretation," in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 267.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 275.

²⁰J. I. Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 350.

²¹J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973) 4-5; and Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 25-27.

The *sensus plenior* can be applied both to certain straightforwardly predictive passages, as well as to typological passages. Hagner sees the tracing or typological correspondences as a special instance of detecting the *sensus plenior* of the OT.²²

Some examples of predictive prophecies are the fulfillment of several statements from Psalms 22 and 69 at the crucifixion of Christ. The cry of "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" in Ps 22:1 had its fulfillment in Christ's words from the cross (Matt 27:46). The words of scorn and the shaking of heads in Ps 22:7 had their fulfillment in the hurling of abuse and the wagging of the heads of those who passed by Christ's crucifixion (Matt 27:39). The dividing up of garments and the casting of lots for clothing in Ps 22:18 were also fulfilled at the scene of Christ's humiliation (Matt 27:35). The prediction of gall for food and vinegar for drink in Ps 69:21 was fulfilled in the offer of those items to Christ as he suffered on the cross (Matt 27:34, 48). The fuller-meaning interpretation of the passages from these two Psalms is that both have their own historical context and referent. Both described the experience of an Israelite centuries before Christ came. But with *sensus plenior* in view, God so superintended the writing of the words of the Psalms in such a way that they have their fullest meaning in the crucifixion narrative of Jesus Christ.²³

Another example of predictive prophecy is the first promise of Messianic redemption in Gen 3:15. To suggest that the "seed" of the "woman" who would bruise the head of the serpent was a prophecy of Mary, the Virgin Birth, and the redemptive work of Jesus, is to get more from the text than can be obtained through grammatical-historical exegesis. On the other hand, as LaSor has explained, to see a fullness in the promise that can be understood when, and only when, that fullness is revealed later in the text of Scripture, seems only reasonable hermeneutically. Scripture is like a seed in which are all the elements that will ultimately develop into the tree, its leaves, and its fruit. Yet when that seed is analyzed under the highest-powered microscope, those elements are not revealed.²⁴

An example in Matt 2:15 of typological fulfillment is the return of Jesus from Egypt to Israel while an infant in fulfillment of the statement in Hos 11:1: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Another example is the slaughter of children two years and younger in Bethlehem and its vicinity (Matt 2:17) as a typological fulfillment of Jer 31:15 which describes the lamenting and weeping that took place at Ramah when Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians.

²²Donald A. Hagner, "The Old Testament in the New Testament," in *Interpreting the Word of God*, ed. Samuel J. Schultz and Morris A. Inch (Chicago: Moody, 1976) 94.

²³*Ibid.*, 97.

²⁴LaSor, "The *Sensus Plenior* and Biblical Interpretation," 273.

Matthew saw a fuller sense in those OT passages than was intended by their original authors. This was due to divine revelation given to Matthew by which he saw the correspondence between the OT materials and events in his day.²⁵

To be open to a *sensus plenior* to Scripture is to consider that there is possibly additional meaning to certain OT passages, prophetic and poetic, than was consciously apparent to the original author, and more than can be gained through grammatical-historical exegesis. Such is the nature of divine inspiration that the authors of Scripture themselves were often not conscious of the fullest meaning of the words which they wrote. This fuller meaning can be seen only in retrospect through the light of fulfillment in the NT.

THE SINGLE MEANING VIEW AS HELD BY EVANGELICALS

An alternative view within evangelicalism to the idea of a *sensus plenior* to Scripture is the contention that both authors (God and the human penmen) said exactly what they meant to say in any passage of Scripture. Prophecy has only one meaning and not two in some instances, i.e., the prophet's understanding and God's later meaning. The fuller meaning view is antithetical to the claim of Scripture, so that if pressed consistently would lead to an outright departure from the concept of an intelligible revelation from God, according to Walter Kaiser, who is currently the leading advocate of the single meaning view.²⁶ Kaiser asserts that while God was the principal author of Scripture and used the vocabularies, idioms, circumstances, and personalities of each of the human authors, yet there was such a unity between God and those authors that the latter did understand the meaning of the words of their written texts. The argument is based upon Paul's statement that his words were not merely the result of his own human intelligence, but the result of that "which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor 2:13). Kaiser's explanation of Paul's statement is as follows:

It is the organic unity between the words of the writer and the work of the Holy Spirit that is the key point of the I Corinthians 2:13 reference. There the Holy Spirit *teaches* the apostle in words. Consequently, the writer was not oblivious to the import or verbal meaning of his terms: he himself was taught by the Holy Spirit. Such a claim can only mean there was a living assimilation of God's intended truth into the verbalization

²⁵Hagner, "When the Time Had Fully Come," 92.

²⁶Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Single Intent of Scripture," in *Evangelical Roots*, ed. Kenneth Kantzer (Nashville: Nelson, 1978) 123-24.

of the writers of Scripture, rather than a mere mechanical printout of semi-understandable verbiage.²⁷

Therefore God's meaning and revelatory intention in any particular passage of Scripture can be accurately and confidently ascertained by studying the verbal meaning of the inspired text of the human authors. The single verbal meaning of the text can be ascertained by using the grammatical-historical method of exegesis. God imparted to the writers of Scripture just as much as they needed to make their messages effective for that moment in history and for the contribution to progressive revelation. What God meant they meant, and what they meant God meant. He did not make them omniscient.²⁸ But this is to argue for authorial control, both God's and the human authors', with God's authority the ultimate control. Both said what they intended to say.²⁹

The equation that the single verbal meaning equals authorial intention has been advocated by E. D. Hirsch who wrote, "Verbal meaning is, by definition that aspect of a speaker's 'intention' (in a phenomenological sense) which, under linguistic conventions, may be shared by others."³⁰

The importance of the application of this equation in biblical hermeneutics has been cited by Norman Geisler:

The locus of meaning (and truth) is not in the author's mind behind the text of Scripture. What the author meant is expressed *in* the text. The writings (γραφή) are inspired, not the thoughts in the author's mind.³¹

He further explained that "all we know of the author's intention is what the author did express in the text, not what he planned to say but did not express. Our knowledge of the author's plan (intention) is limited to the inspired text itself."³²

If individual writers are not sovereign over the use of their own words, and if meaning is not a return to how they intended their own words to be regarded, then biblical hermeneutics is in a most difficult situation, according to the single meaning view. In this situation communication would have been given, but there is uncertainty with regard to some passages of the OT as to whether or not the message

²⁷Ibid., 137.

²⁸Ibid., 127-28.

²⁹Ibid., 141.

³⁰E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University, 1967) 218.

³¹Norman L. Geisler, "The Relation of Purpose and Meaning In Interpreting Scripture," *GTJ* 5 (1984) 230.

³²Ibid.

has been fully received. When the normal rules of exegesis are applied to the words of these texts, the exegete fails to yield as adequate a meaning as when he digs into the fuller sense meaning of those texts given later in the progress of revelation. It is recognized that the interpreter is not able to gather all the special nuances that a writer may have had in his mind, nor is he able to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the total subject dealt with in a text through an exegesis of that text itself. But there must be adequate knowledge of what the author intended to say if communication is to be a reality. This demands authorial intent as meaning.³³

Earl Radmacher suggests that to separate word meaning from the author's intent can result in multiple meanings and thus no meaning and thereby hermeneutical nihilism.³⁴ He also claims that to render the author without control and ignorant of the meaning of his words makes the Bible something less than a truly human document.³⁵

Vern Poythress gives support to this idea that the single meaning of a text is located solely in the author's intention as expressed in his own usage of his words:

Does 'meaning' have to do with 'what is going on in the speaker's mind at the time?' But 'what is going on in his mind' may include feelings of hunger or sleepiness, reminiscences about events of the day, and other material only vaguely related to the subject of his discourse. Let us therefore try again. Is the 'meaning' what the speaker thought about the discourse? This is close to what is wanted. But how do we find out about what he thought, except from the discourse itself?³⁶

Grammatical-historical interpretation will therefore produce the meaning of the words of a Scripture and thereby the intent of both the divine and human authors. Grammatical-historical interpretation brings out of the text all that it contains of the thoughts, attitudes, and assumptions of the author. It will include the same depth of meaning as the writer himself included when, in the words of Kaiser,

the interpretation is controlled by the words the writer uses, by the range of meaning he gives to those words as judged by his usage elsewhere, by the total context of his thought, and by the preceding revealed theology

³³Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward An Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 47.

³⁴Earl D. Radmacher, "A Response to Author's Intention and Biblical Interpretation," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 433.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 436.

³⁶Vern S. Poythress, "Analyzing a Biblical Text: Some Important Linguistic Distinctions," *SJT* 32 (1979) 123.

in existence when he wrote and to which he explicitly refers or clearly alludes by his use of phrases, concepts, or terms that were then generally known and accepted.³⁷

Kaiser's concept of the theology that precedes the text under hermeneutical consideration is the accumulated and antecedent theology that "informs" that text. Such theology forms the backdrop against which the writer cast his own message. The interpreter is alerted to this important theological data through the direct citations and obvious allusions of the biblical writer. The theological conclusions drawn from a text would then be the objective data, including the "antecedent theology" within the text, which would be exegeted therefrom.³⁸

Once the exegetical work has been completed, then the interpreter can proceed to set the doctrinal content of a particular passage in its total biblical context by way of gathering together what God has said on the topic. This is the analogy of faith of the whole of Scripture. But the analogy of faith should not be used to extricate meaning from or import meaning to texts that appeared earlier than the passage where the teaching is set forth either most clearly or perhaps for the first time. Such an exercise is eisegesis, not exegesis.³⁹

It is recognized that there are passages of Scripture which do have a fuller significance or later ramification than what was realized by the writers. But such significance derives its legitimacy from an author's single meaning in the text.⁴⁰ The argument of Hirsch is drawn on heavily at this point in the distinction which he made between meaning and significance. Hirsch has proposed that,

meaning is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent. *Significance*, on the other hand, names a relationship between that meaning and a person, or a conception, or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable. . . . Significance always implies a relationship, and one constant, unchanging pole of that relationship is what the text means.⁴¹

Applying Hirsch's distinction to biblical hermeneutics, the meaning of the text is the single truth intent of the author, which meaning is constant. The significance of a text is the relationship that the text

³⁷Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Legitimate Hermeneutics," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) 127.

³⁸Kaiser, "The Single Intent of Scripture," 139.

³⁹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 82.

⁴⁰Kaiser, "Legitimate Hermeneutics," 135.

⁴¹Hirsch, 8.

meaning bears to other passages of Scripture which appear later in the progress of revelation. The key is whether or not the objective basis for the later ramification of a text is contained actually in the text itself. Such a determination is derived through grammatical-historical exegesis. If the implication of the text is a different concept or idea from that which the normal rules of grammatical interpretation would yield from the text, then the *sensus plenior* is really a different sense rather than a fuller sense.⁴²

Kaiser's response to one who would plead that the fuller sense is a biblical meaning which can be shown from another passage to be scriptural is:

Then let us go to that passage for that teaching rather than transporting it to odd locations in earlier parts of the canon. The unity of Scripture (an important truth of Scripture) must not be traded for the uniformity of all Scriptures on any topic any of them touches.⁴³

John Goldingay sees an ambivalence in the fuller sense interpretation that is similar to the allegorical approach to Scripture in which meaning is brought to the text. NT interpretation of the OT, such as Matthew's in Matt 2:15, is not an inspired re-application of the meaning of the original text, but rather a utilization of the OT text's own meaning in later Scriptures.⁴⁴

Added to this is the observation of D. L. Baker that in the case of typology, the NT antitype is not an elucidation of the meaning of an OT text, but rather the description of a pattern of God's activity in history, of which the OT author may well have been aware.⁴⁵

When the single meaning advocate turns to the several biblical arguments which appear to support the idea of a *sensus plenior*, he considers the passage in question to teach otherwise. The 1 Pet 1:10-12 passage is interpreted as a prophetic inquiry into the temporal aspects of the subject about which the prophets wrote instead of a search for the exact meaning of what they wrote. While the subject is invariably larger than the verbal meaning communicated on the subject in a single passage of Scripture, nevertheless, a writer can have adequate knowl-

⁴²Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "A Response to Author's Intention and Biblical Interpretation," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 442.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 445.

⁴⁴John Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981) 108-9.

⁴⁵D. L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1976) 264.

edge of the subject at that point, even if he does not have a comprehensive and total knowledge of all parts of the subject.⁴⁶

The disputed Greek phrase is εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν / 'to what or what manner of time' (1 Pet 1:11). Should both τίνα / 'what', and ποῖον / 'what manner of' modify καιρὸν / 'time', with the resulting translation that the prophets searched "to what time or for what manner of time?" The Greek grammar of A. T. Robertson supports the idea of time.⁴⁷ This translation is reflected in the *KJV*, *NEB*, Goodspeed, and Williams translations. Consequently, the translation of the phrase to read "what person or time," found in the *RSV*, *NASB*, and the Berkeley translations is rejected.

Daniel's question "what shall be the end of these things?" in Dan 12:8 is interpreted as a request for additional information about the final outcome of the prophetic revelation given to him. He understood the meaning of the words which he heard but desired additional details. The exhortation which followed in v 9 indicated that no further revelation would be given and that the prophecy had been completed and "sealed" indicating its certainty and not its hiddenness.⁴⁸

A similar explanation is given to Daniel's statement in Dan 8:27. The lack of understanding was on Daniel's part and not on the part of his hearers. But the lack of understanding was not that the words or symbols of the vision were in themselves unintelligible, especially since the angel Gabriel had been commanded to explain the vision to Daniel (Dan 8:16, 19). Rather, in the words of Moses Stuart,

the explanation, like the symbols and the words, is *generic* and not specific. Events are merely sketched; and with the exception of the *terminus ad quem*, time, place, and persons, are not particularized. Daniel was astonished at the destiny which hung over his people.⁴⁹

Daniel was interested in more details than the Lord intended to reveal.

Caiaphas did say what he wanted to say and meant to say as the High Priest in John 11:49–52, it is argued. He advised the Sanhedrin that it was expedient for them that one man die a vicarious death and thereby keep the nation alive. Kaiser sees John's words that Christ's death had universal redemptive implications as a corrective to Caiaphas's wicked political counsel. For this reason Caiaphas had not

⁴⁶Kaiser, "The Single Intent of Scripture," 125–26.

⁴⁷A. T. Robertson, *The General Epistles and the Apocalypse, Word Pictures in the New Testament* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1933) 6. 85.

⁴⁸Kaiser, "The Single Intent of Scripture," 127.

⁴⁹Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1850) 249.

prophesied in the ordinary sense of the word. He did not belong to the class of prophets who received revelation from God.⁵⁰

This alternative view to the *sensus plenior* in evangelicalism is that there is a single meaning for all of Scripture, which meaning is the literal meaning intended by both God and the human authors. There are passages of Scripture which have later implications in the progress of revelation. Such later implications are the developments of objectively given data in the earlier texts, and consequently, they are not some sort of *superadditum* or *sensus plenior* to the human authors' understanding and intent as expressed in their own words.

CONCLUSION

Is there a fuller meaning to certain texts of Scripture? This question must continue to be addressed by evangelicals. The several implications of the question are of vital importance to both general hermeneutics as well as the special hermeneutics of biblical predictions. Since it is a question of biblical interpretation, the issue of the authority of Scripture also comes into play.

As evangelicals continue to address the question, they must examine scriptural texts that seem to point to the biblical writers' alleged ignorance, passivity, or mundane apprehension of the messages which they received and delivered. Do such texts really show that they were unaware of the full import of the words of their texts? Could it be that those texts teach otherwise, and that coupled with the inference drawn from certain texts that the writers were taught of God, the Scriptures teach that the human authors did understand the full meaning of their words?

A review of the biblical ideas of revelation and inspiration is also called for in the debate. If the human writers wrote beyond what they knew, then has not divine revelation ceased to be a disclosure or unveiling? What should the author and the first readers of their texts have known and believed by the words of those texts? If the meanings of those texts were somehow incomplete due to the need for the revelation of later fuller meanings, did the author and his contemporaries hold to erroneous ideas foisted upon them by divine revelation given in their day? If NT quotations of the OT do reinterpret or supersede the original meaning of the OT writer, does this not break the doctrinal continuity between the testaments in the progress of God's revelation? Does not the doctrine of inspiration guarantee that God and the human authors meant exactly what texts said? If more was meant than what was said, is there not the danger that this "more"

⁵⁰Kaiser, "The Single Intent of Scripture," 130-31.

that needed to be said might turn out to be a corrective to the earlier revelation? What are the implications of this for inerrancy?

In discussing the authorship of the Bible, one must not lose sight of the truth that God is the primary and ultimate author. But the Bible is also a truly human book since God by condescension did accommodate himself to use human personalities and languages. Should not the same rules that are used to unlock the meaning of the words of the authors of other ancient documents be used to determine the meaning of the words of Scripture? Or is inspiration reduced to the idea of a theory that God placed ready-made phrases in the uncomprehending minds of the writers of Scripture?

The legitimacy of grammatical-historical interpretation may also be at stake. If the use of the grammatical-historical method does not produce the full meaning of certain texts, how can one be sure that the fuller meaning is in fact discovered by the application of that same method to later texts supposedly revealing the fuller meaning of the earlier texts? If grammatical-historical exegesis is suspect at one point, should it not be suspect at all other points of its application?

The questions are not easily answered. The task of resolving the issue will be strenuous. But the ultimate goal is the accurate interpretation of God's Word for the edification of his people and his ultimate glory.



REVIEW ARTICLE

C. H. Spurgeon, Biblical Inerrancy, and Premillennialism

JOHN C. WHITCOMB

Lamplighter and Son, by Craig Skinner. Nashville: Broadman, 1984. Pp. 269. Cloth. \$11.95.

Many who consider Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) to have been one of the greatest pastor-teachers in all of church history would be surprised to learn that he was the father of twin sons who also became preachers of God's Word. If Charles Haddon could be called "the forgotten Spurgeon" (as one prominent biographer, Iain Murray, entitled his book), how much less remembered are his two sons!

One of his sons, Thomas (1856-1917), spent many years in Australia and New Zealand, built the largest regular Free Church congregation in the southern hemisphere in Auckland (p. 53), and finally succeeded his father as pastor of the great Metropolitan Tabernacle of South London (1894-1908). The predictably hopeless task of effectively filling the shoes of his father was complicated not only by physical weakness but also by the jealousy and strong opposition of his father's younger brother, James A. Spurgeon, who had served well in the Tabernacle for several years as a copastor (pp. 99-111; but cf. p. 92). Others were brought into the conflict, including the noted American Bible teacher, A. T. Pierson (pp. 100-105).

In 1898, during a Pastors' College conference, the huge Tabernacle burned to the ground (pp. 160-64). The rebuilding project was one of Thomas Spurgeon's greatest achievements (p. 220). Nevertheless, crowds were much smaller in the new building (p. 164), and "he held the fort with a diminishing following for years until his health made the task impossible" (p. 219). German bombs destroyed the building in 1941 (the reviewer saw it in this condition in September, 1945). It was rebuilt on a smaller scale in 1959; and then began a ten-year decline to practically a handful of people (cf. Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon* [Chicago: Moody, 1984] 243). Since 1970, however, it has been the center of a significant teaching and outreach ministry led by Peter Masters. The present reviewer was privileged to participate in the School of Theology as well as pulpit ministries there in 1980, 1982, 1983, and 1984 and appreciates the firm doctrinal position of the Tabernacle leaders today.

While *Lamplighter and Son* exhibits significant biographical depth (Skinner's ten years of research are manifest in the sometimes lengthy 616 endnotes and 36 pages of photographs), the value is somewhat tarnished by "imaginative reconstruction of inner thoughts and private conversations" (Foreword by Barrington R. White; cf. p. 223). Furthermore, it is disappointing to find theological compromise in such crucial areas as the inerrancy of Scripture.

As an Australian, Skinner has had access to many facts and photos of the places where Thomas Spurgeon lived and ministered from 1877 to 1893 in Australia and especially in New Zealand. He also provides fascinating insights into the lives of other prominent Christian leaders of those days who were connected with or influenced by the Spurgeon family, such as Dwight L. Moody, Ira D. Sankey, Henry Varley, George Muller, Joseph Parker, F. B. Meyer, Alexander Maclaren, Sam Jones, R. A. Torrey, Charles M. Alexander, J. Wilbur Chapman, John McNeill, and Gipsy Smith.

Skinner gives special attention to the ministry of A. C. Dixon (1854–1925), an American disciple of C. H. Spurgeon who served as pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle from 1911 to 1919. According to Skinner, Dixon, a Southern Baptist, set the pattern for "the original" Fundamentalism, "a moderate (thoughtful, sensible, sensitive) positive defense of orthodoxy, without any extremism," through his editing and publishing (with the financial backing of Lyman Stewart and Milton Stewart) of *The Fundamentals*, twelve paper booklets, three million copies of which were distributed worldwide (p. 206).

In these booklets, Dixon discussed "the supernatural authority of the Bible without utilizing inerrancy and infallibility as rallying points essential for belief in inspiration" (p. 207). In those days "many simply did not accept the fact that a commitment to absolute infallibility and inerrancy was essential for fellowship, or even right doctrine. Inspiration was the test, not any particular hard-line interpretation of the meaning of inspiration" (p. 207). Skinner concludes that "the current (neo) evangelical resurgence of today is a return to original perspectives" (p. 207). To him, men like E. J. Carnell, Bernard Ramm, H. J. Ockenga, and Billy Graham have "led the way to a new day in transdenominational fellowship, and promoted a social ethic that allowed for the highest commitment to biblical inspiration and authority without . . . bibliolatry" (p. 206).

In labeling the doctrine of the inerrancy of the divine autographs as an extreme position (even "bibliolatry"), Skinner reflects the institutionally powerful "moderate" (neo-evangelical to neo-orthodox) wing of Southern Baptists today. He offers no biblical/exegetical support for his "moderate" view of Scripture, exemplifying the alarming trend among neo-evangelical theologians today to ignore the implications of the teachings of Christ and the apostles on this vital subject (e.g., Matt 5:18; John 10:35; and 2 Pet 1:21). Furthermore, Skinner evidences no awareness of the widely-publicized *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* issued in 1978, six years before the publication of this book.

Many who believe that every word in the biblical autographs was *theopneustos* (God-breathed—2 Tim 3:16), and who also believe that Spurgeon

preached this truth, will be surprised to find him and his son Thomas positioned on the inspiration issue with Karl Barth. Barth, we are told, adopted the "functional-infallibility perspective" toward Scripture, as opposed to "the total inerrancy position (correct in all scientific and historical details)," of modern fundamentalism, which can be described as "an evidence-judgment perspective" (p. 236). D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, and Billy Graham, as well as the Spurgeons, should be identified with Barth's position, not the fundamentalist position, according to Skinner.

Helmut Thielicke, "one of our most erudite contemporary German theologians" (p. 233), though well known today for his rejection of biblical inerrancy (cf. his *Between Heaven and Earth* [New York: Harper and Row, 1965] 33-34) is likewise upheld as a model thinker on this vital issue. "C. H. Spurgeon consistently appears to treat inspiration as a *result*. . . . Helmut Thielicke defines the real secret of Spurgeon's power as centering exactly on this understanding." But this is precisely the tragedy and danger of neo-orthodoxy. The Bible is viewed as being "infallible" (or even "inerrant") *only to the extent that it speaks to man's heart*, and thus produces a spiritual "result." This is apparently how Skinner can endorse Herschel H. Hobbs's explanation of the Southern Baptist confession of 1963 (the Bible is "without any mixture of error"): "while Southern Baptists hold to the inerrancy of the Scriptures, their infallibility rests upon the fact that they do what they are designed to do" (p. 234).

As for Charles Haddon Spurgeon himself, Skinner is quite sure that he understood biblical infallibility simply "as meaning that there was an unflinching confidence in the Scripture's ability to fulfill the purposes for which it was created, chiefly, the 'making wise unto salvation' purpose. There is no discussion of the historical/scientific accuracy/inerrancy question in all of Spurgeon's convictions regarding inspiration" (p. 255).

It seems to the present reviewer that Skinner has failed to substantiate the above mentioned claims. What is known of Charles Haddon Spurgeon's strong stand for the Word of God during the dismal "Downgrade Controversy" in his final years (cf. chap. 6 in Iain H. Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* [London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973]) would surely have put him on the side of those today, a hundred years later, who are involved in an even more intense controversy against those in the Southern Baptist Convention and elsewhere who are denying the truth of the Bible (cf. Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976] 89-105).

In *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim have made a similar attempt to line up great Christian witnesses of past centuries in opposition to the supposedly recent and novel "Princeton-Warfield" view of biblical inerrancy. The superficial scholarship displayed in this work has been carefully exposed by such theologians as John D. Woodbridge (*Biblical Authority* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982]; cf. J. D. Woodbridge and Randall H. Balmer, "The Princetonians and Biblical Authority," in D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983]). Even Clark Pinnock, no great friend of biblical inerrancy, has admitted that Woodbridge "dealt their thesis a deadly blow" because "Rogers/McKim

climbed so far out on a limb only to have it cut off behind them" (Review of Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority* in *TSF Bulletin* 7:1 [September-October, 1983] 31).

The fact that C. H. Spurgeon and Thomas Spurgeon did not spell out in exact late-twentieth century theological terms their convictions concerning the infallibility of the Bible does not mean that they would side with the anti-inerrancy position of Karl Barth, Helmut Thielicke, and numerous Southern Baptist theologians today. To imply that they would do so is neither fair nor honest in the light of historical facts. Skinner asserts that "there is no discussion of the historical/scientific accuracy/inerrancy question in all of Spurgeon's convictions regarding inspiration" (p. 255). But this is a serious blunder. Note, for example, the following statement by Spurgeon:

The thoughts of God are in no degree perverted by being uttered in the words of men. The testimony of God, on the human as well as the divine side, is perfect and infallible; and however others may think of it, we shall not cease to believe in it with all our heart and soul. *The Holy Spirit has made no mistake, either in history, physics, theology, or anything else.* God is a greater Scientist than any of those who assume that title. If the human side had tainted the lesser statements we could not be sure of the greater. . . . But the human side has communicated no taint whatever to Holy Scripture [*Sword and Trowel* (1889) 551; quoted in L. R. Bush and T. J. Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible* [Chicago: Moody, 1980] 251; emphasis added].

See also C. H. Spurgeon's statement on inerrancy quoted in Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (p. 64 in the 1966 edition and p. 56 in 1973 edition). *Lamplighter and Son* must therefore be placed, sadly, among the many works that have "passed along to mankind the concept of a personality somewhat weaker than the real Spurgeon. . . . Because his burning earnestness and unyielding theological convictions are so little known it is assumed that he was much like the average evangelical of today" (Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, author's preface).

With Skinner's credibility as a theologian and a historian deeply shaken by these considerations, what may be said of his perspectives concerning the Spurgeons and premillennialism? Although Skinner now serves as professor of preaching at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (Southern Baptist) in San Francisco, he did serve for several years (1979-1982) as professor of practical theology at a premillennial institution, Biola University/Talbot Theological Seminary. Nevertheless, he expresses great antipathy toward "the prima donnas of premillennialism" (p. 207) and their "eschatological encrustations" (p. 206), never pausing to explain or justify these heavy accusations. He is quite sure that it was William Bell Riley who "added inerrancy and premillennialism to [the Fundamentalist] creed" about 1921 (p. 210). However, by continually linking premillennialism with inerrancy as the twin enemies of "the older Fundamentalism" (cf. p. 205), Skinner inadvertently focuses the attention of his more theologically conservative readers upon premillennial eschatology as a possible result of interpreting the Bible carefully and consistently.

Skinner asserts that Spurgeon and his son did not identify with premillennialism a hundred years ago in England. To some extent that may be true, especially with regard to the Plymouth Brethren movement. But the

difference between Spurgeon and Skinner in this respect is quite profound. In the nineteenth century, premillennialism was only beginning to re-emerge from fifteen hundred years of Augustinian and Roman Catholic suppression. Some of the earliest successors of the apostles, such as Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian were clearly premillennial (see full discussion in George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1952]). One investigator has concluded that

there [was] a general belief throughout all the [early church] periods investigated that Christ will some time in the future establish a kingdom in which he and the saints of God would reign. . . . The kingdom will be established after the resurrection of the righteous and those who give a length to the kingdom state that it will last for a thousand years [Charles A. Hauser, Jr., "The Eschatology of the Early Church Fathers (unpublished Th.D. diss.; Winona Lake, Indiana: Grace Theological Seminary, 1961) 228].

Spurgeon was largely self-taught in the Scriptures, and concentrated mostly on the writings of Calvin and the English Puritans. But today, theologians in the United States such as Skinner have immediate access to many more carefully written studies on premillennial eschatology than did Spurgeon. Even in Spurgeon's day, however, Henry Alford (1810–71), the dean of Canterbury, in his monumental four-volume edition of the Greek New Testament, insisted that the thousand-year reign of Christ following his Second Coming as described in Revelation 20 be understood literally. Six different times and in three different contexts the apostle John refers to this period as lasting "one thousand years." In the light of such exegetical facts, Alford wrote

I cannot consent to distort words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of . . . any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for 300 years, understood them in the plain literal sense; and it is a strange sight in these days [1860] to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. . . . If the second [resurrection] is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope [*The Greek New Testament* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894) 732, commenting on Rev 20:4–6].

Evidently, Spurgeon was not really opposed to premillennial teaching. He himself "expected a personal reign of Christ from Jerusalem" (p. 79), and warmly welcomed Dwight L. Moody to his pulpit, knowing that he was "clearly premillennial in eschatology" (p. 174). Others whom he welcomed to his pulpit, such as A. T. Pierson and A. C. Dixon, were also premillennial. Furthermore, he was willing to sign an Evangelical Baptist "statement of doctrine which closed with an affirmation of the pre-millennial Advent" (p. 79). This statement (*The Sword and Trowel* [1891] 446) concluded: "Our hope is the Personal Pre-millennial Return of the Lord Jesus in glory" (cf. Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* [1966 edition] 220).

Why did Charles Haddon Spurgeon sign a premillennial document? Skinner, evidently perplexed by this fact, states, in the words of a student in the Pastor's College, "If he had drawn it up himself I very much doubt if he would have inserted that sentence" (p. 79). Perhaps so. But there is a much more probable explanation available; namely, that he respected premillennialism for its literal approach to biblical prophecy, but did not feel adequately qualified to expound on it. Spurgeon was well aware of his own growth in knowledge in certain doctrinal areas. For example, Spurgeon wrote, "The reader will, perhaps, remark considerable progress in some of the sentiments here made public, particularly in the case of the doctrine of the Second Coming of our Lord; but he will remember that he who is learning truth will learn it by degrees, and if he teaches as he learns, it is to be expected that his lessons will become fuller every day" (*The Early Years 1834-54*, vol. 1 of *C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography* [Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976] 395).

Iain Murray sees much ambiguity in Spurgeon's prophetic views, disillusioned as he must have been at times by some extreme statements of contemporary preachers (*The Puritan Hope* [Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975] 261-62). Nevertheless, Murray observes that a "premillennial belief remained with Spurgeon throughout his ministry, [and] is expressed in some of the closing sermons of his life" (p. 257). "On one occasion he does speak of two future resurrections separated by an interval of time" (p. 259). Occasionally "he would proclaim a premillennial appearing in such terms that one might assume he had repudiated all his many statements on the other side" (p. 263). Murray finds it "not surprising" that "the premillennial hope came more to the fore in Spurgeon's closing years" (p. 264). In the light of all these considerations, the reviewer speculates that *if* Spurgeon and his son were living and preaching in the United States today, where the majority of baptistic fundamentalists are strongly committed to premillennialism, and where an abundance of scholarly premillennial commentaries and theologies are available, they *might* also be identified with those who believe that Scripture teaches a literal thousand-year reign of Christ on earth following his Second Advent and the literal accomplishment of all his promises to ethnic Israel in spite of all her sins as a stupendous testimony to his sovereign grace.

In conclusion, Skinner has performed a service to the Church in bringing to light little known documents concerning the life and ministry of C. H. Spurgeon's son Thomas and of A. C. Dixon, a later pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. But he has done a disservice to one of the greatest pastor-teachers of all Christian history, and thus to the Christ whom he faithfully served, by raising serious questions concerning the absolute and plenary inerrancy of the biblical autographs and by implying that Spurgeon (and his son) were similarly ambivalent on this foundational fact of special revelation.

May the publication of a book like this provoke some faithful theologian and historian, under the providence of God, to write the long-awaited, truly definitive study of the life and doctrines of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, for the encouragement of God's servants in our day.

REVIEW ARTICLE

That You May Believe

GEORGE J. ZEMEK, JR.

That You May Believe: Miracles and Faith Then and Now, by Colin Brown. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; and Exeter, United Kingdom: Paternoster, 1985. Pp. 232. Paper. \$7.95.

That You May Believe is a popularized sequel to Brown's technical volume, *Miracles and the Critical Mind*. The author successfully targets his audience with a practical introduction (cf. pp. vii-xi), and a helpful organizational survey and content summary (pp. xi-xiii). There is an annotated bibliography at the end of the book (pp. 223-27).

Part I (six chapters) is entitled "Can We Still Believe in Miracles?" The leading paragraph introduces and summarizes both part I and chap. I ("From Foundation to Crutch to Cross"):

In days gone by, miracles were seen as clear-cut proof of divine intervention. Christians answered their critics and persecutors by pointing to the miracles performed by Jesus and his followers. Miracles were like God's seal of approval. They were a kind of guarantee, for all to see, of God's backing. But today many people are unsure which side the miracle stories are really on. They see them as more of a liability than an asset. At best they have changed from being a foundation for faith to being an object of faith. At worst they have to be apologized for. Miracles seem to belong to the realm of myth and fantasy. They do not seem to have a place in the technological world of computers, body transplants, and space shuttles. From being a foundation for the faith, they seem to have become a cross that the defender of the faith has to bear [p. 3].

Concerning miracles and the apostolic testimony, Acts 2:22-24 and 10:38-41 are cited as examples. A very abbreviated section follows on the apologetical significance of miracles as gleaned from the pages of church history (pp. 5-6). At the core of chap. I is an outline of the rise of skepticism (pp. 6-13). One of the questions asked is "Can We Be Sure of the Evidence?" In response, the critical mind reasons:

What independent corroborating evidence is there for the miracles of the New Testament? We have the word of the books themselves. In some cases we also have the word of the early church fathers. But then, these fathers got their information from the New Testament. And so we seem to be back to square one.

What we have before us are not the miracles of Jesus themselves but only reports of miracles. And there is a world of difference between seeing something for ourselves and merely reading a report of it [p. 7].

Another important question which prompts critical thinking is "Can There Be Violations of the Laws of Nature?" (p. 7). Spinoza is used as a paradigm of extrapolation in response to this question (pp. 7-9). During the Reformation period a far more benign question surfaced: "What Do Miracles Prove?" (p. 10). This was "a question not so much of whether miracles could happen [cf. Spinoza] but of what precisely they proved" (pp. 10-11). What becomes obvious through Brown's scanning of the skeptics is that because of this avalanche of doubt and ridicule, "the miracle stories were not simply a cross to bear. They had become a cross to be dropped" (p. 13).

At this juncture the author challenges the reader with the crucial question: "What Then Should We Think About Miracles?" (p. 13). He detains a final answer but appeals to Augustine, Calvin, and Luther (pp. 13-16):

Perhaps the time has come for us to listen more attentively to the witness of Augustine, Calvin, and Luther. If we do, we might find ourselves asking whether the traditional arguments are quite the right arguments. We might find ourselves asking whether we need to look beyond the apparent violations of nature to the harmony of a higher order, whether we need to look beyond the desire for objective proofs to the place of miracles in a sacramental universe, and whether we need to look at miracles not just in connection with the incarnation but rather in the context of the Trinity [p. 16].

As a result of this conclusion the reader may be sufficiently convinced of the shortcomings of the traditional apologetical appeal to miracles; however, it is not yet clear where Brown is heading.

Chap. 2 deals with "David Hume and Company." In reference to Hume's two-phased argument, Brown does a commendable job in outlining this "classical attack" against miracles (pp. 17-23). There is also a brief survey of some of the most famous deistic writings (pp. 23-26). Commencing with the heading entitled "Pros and Cons," Brown evaluates those historical attacks (pp. 26-32). He correctly refutes Hume at the presuppositional level:

At the outset of his discussion Hume laid down the principle that "a wise man . . . proportions his belief to the evidence." But he ends up by saying, in effect, that a wise man will refuse to look at the evidence at all. Or, if he does, he will just dismiss it. Once he has made up his mind that a miracle is "a violation of the laws of nature," Hume allows nothing to count as such a violation. Whatever evidence there might be is automatically dismissed [p. 27].

Subsequently, he exposes the fallacies and inconsistencies of Hume's four major observations (pp. 27-30). The author anticipates a future challenge (cf. chaps. 10-12) of the uniqueness of Jesus' healings and states in response that "they were not just any healings but the works of the Christ, foretold in prophecy and fulfilled by Jesus" (p. 30).

"The Curious Case of the King of Siam" is the intriguing title of chap. 3. This title corresponds to the skeptic king from the writings of John Locke who would not believe in ice. His illustration prompted many generations of philosophical interaction (p. 33). The point that Brown makes is that "Locke's

story pinpoints the problem of miracles. It embodies what philosophers call the principle of analogy. . . . Experience in the past is my guide to the present and the future" (p. 34).

The resurrection of Jesus is introduced next, and Brown responds with his previously anticipated argument. The thesis for which he argues is that "the very existence of the church cannot be explained without presupposing the resurrection of Christ" (p. 37). A brief but adequate explanation buttresses this historical thesis; however, he does not yet inform the reader of some of the limitations of such argumentation, though he states that "maybe our present experience should not fool us into imagining that we know everything there is to know" (p. 37).

The author then proceeds from the previous discussion to a background for a definition of a miracle:

Of course, miracles are improbable. They would not be miracles if they were not improbable. Of course, we cannot predict them in the same way the scientist predicts things on the basis of proven experiments. That is what makes them miracles. If they were common, repeatable events that could be reproduced on demand, they would simply be ordinary events. . . . Miracles are like warning flags. They signal the presence of a different order of reality that is present in the midst of our everyday world [pp. 37–38].

From this base he responds to Hume's skepticism by reasoning that miracles are "not so much as violations of an existing order but as indications of the presence of a different order" (p. 38).

"Two Observations" capstone chap. 3. The first of these is extremely important: "Miracles do not normally serve to establish belief in God" (p. 39). "The second observation is that analogy is really a two-way process" (p. 39). After showing that the skeptic proceeds only down a one-way street, Brown states that "it may be that we are like the King of Siam. We may be using the present to judge the past, when what we need to do is to allow the past to judge the present and open us to God's future" (p. 40).

Chap. 4 is devoted to C. S. Lewis's contributions to the ongoing debate over miracles. After Brown extols him and highlights some of "the lay Theologian's" apologetical works (pp. 41–42), Lewis's primary contention of preconceptions is presented:

To Lewis the problem was not the amount (or lack) of evidence there may (or may not be) [sic] for any given miracle. The real problem lies in the way we look at things. Seeing is not believing, for what we see is regularly colored by our existing deep-seated beliefs. Not only religious believers do this. The atheist and the agnostic do it as well [p. 42].

Lewis indeed recognized the implications of one's worldview (p. 43). He also "believed in an ordered universe that was open to the personal action of human beings and of God" (p. 45). "Lewis saw a parallel between miracles and God's acts in general. . . . He saw in . . . miracles a concentration of divine activity that performed in an instant what nature can perform only over a prolonged period" (pp. 46–47). Unfortunately, this could be read merely as accelerated providence.

The "well almost" portion of chap. 4 (entitled "C. S. Lewis to the Rescue—Well Almost") begins with Brown's appropriate reminder:

In Roman Catholic circles there is a saying about Thomas Aquinas: "Thomas has spoken; the case is closed." In some evangelical circles today the impression is given that when C. S. Lewis has said anything, nothing much remains to be said. But has Lewis said the last word on miracles? Has he rescued belief in miracles once and for all? Lewis himself was more modest in his claims than some of his posthumous admirers. He deliberately called his book on Miracles *A Preliminary Study* [p. 47].

Brown emphasizes two significant strengths of Lewis's work on miracles: 1) his reluctance to become involved in certain scientific speculations, and 2) his consistent emphasis upon the preconceptions of materialistic determinism (p. 48). Concerning the former strength, Brown's observation is noteworthy: "Theologians and apologists can easily get out of their element in trying to draw implications from technical disciplines outside their expertise" (p. 48). I would assert that the reciprocal of this statement is also true.

The major weaknesses of Lewis's argument are acknowledged by Brown (pp. 48–50). He first addresses Lewis's "leap of faith"; for example, "despite his many insights and incisive attacks on materialistic determinism, Lewis's philosophical theology fails to provide compelling reasons for belief in a miracle-working God" (p. 49). In reference to Lewis's "acceleration theory," Brown recognizes that "it does not really help us if we were to claim that the changing of water into wine and the feeding of the five thousand were really only accelerated instances of natural processes" (p. 49). Brown also challenges Lewis's idea of "miracles of the New Creation" (pp. 49–50; cf. p. 47): "Perhaps some of the other miracles [i.e., prior to the Resurrection] in the Gospels are better seen, not as Miracles of the Old Creation, but as anticipations of God's new order breaking into our order" (p. 50).

"What sort of World Do We Live In?" is the theme of chap. 5. At the outset Brown astutely notes that "the answer we get to this question depends on whom we ask it" (p. 51). The author correctly points out the fallacies of "the God-of-the-Gaps View" (i.e., that "the supernatural is to be encountered in the gaps between the natural" [p. 52]).

The author's main burden is given in the second portion of chap. 5 (pp. 55–61). His first point is developed (pp. 55–57) and applied to our complex existence:

In the divine structuredness of our existence God's grace is not an alternative to our human action. At the center of Christian existence stands the paradox. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, living as creatures our creaturely existence in the world. But at the same time we are to realize that God is at work in us, willing and working for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13) [p. 58].

His second point involves the testing of claims. A very important caution surfaces in the midst of this discussion:

I . . . think it is a mistake to try to show the truth of God and the world by arguing in the abstract. The attempt to prove the existence of God first and then

to show that this God is the God of Christian faith is full of pitfalls. . . . But the biblical writers never argued from an abstract God of natural theology to the living God of their faith. . . . They did not move from reason to faith. Rather, it was from the standpoint of their faith that they were able to express both the mystery and the rationality of life [pp. 59–60].

The last portion of the chapter (“Where Do Miracles Fit In?”) is characterized by the author’s acceptance of a both/and tension between miracles and the ‘natural world’ (pp. 60–61).

In chap. 6 Brown attempts to answer the question, “What then is a Miracle?” He suggests that this question must be answered on two levels, the philosophical and the theological (pp. 62–63). He concedes, however, that these are not always distinguishable in practice, because “philosophy encroaches upon theology and theology encroaches upon philosophy” (p. 63). The first portion of the chapter is largely a summary of previous personalities and arguments (pp. 63–69) supplemented by a survey of the distinction drawn by R. F. Holland between the “contingency concept” of the miraculous and the “violation concept” (pp. 65–67).

As Brown more fully develops his own approach (pp. 69–74), he asserts that one must begin with a faith commitment (p. 70). Unfortunately, Brown fails to acknowledge the presuppositional basis of his interpretation of the event, though he later sides with the presuppositionalist (pp. 73–74). The author must also be challenged on most if not all of the illustrations given to argue that “some miracles in the Bible admit the presence of natural factors” (p. 72).

“The Theological Question” (pp. 74–77) is introduced by an abbreviated survey of the OT and NT vocabulary for miracles. Brown contends that Deuteronomy 13:1–3 “became decisive for Jewish attitudes to miracles” (p. 74), and that “it is a characteristic of signs to point beyond themselves to Yahweh’s ordering or overriding of nature and history” (p. 75). The author emphasizes the significance of the continuity of “signs and wonders” in the NT. Interrupting his survey is an important reminder which has practical ramifications: “Both Jesus and Paul deprecated the desire for signs (Matthew 12:39; 16:4; cf. Luke 11:16, 19; John 4:48; 1 Corinthians 1:22). The demand for a sign is indicative of a refusal to respond to what has already been given” (p. 76). Little interpretation is given to the scriptural data; therefore, Brown concludes Part I by promising an integration and systematization in Parts II and III of his book (p. 77).

Part II (“What Do the Miracle Stories Tell Us about Jesus?”) unfolds in five chapters, beginning with “The Quest of the Unhistorical Jesus.”

What was Jesus really like? To many the Christ of Christian theology—and, for that matter, the Christ of the New Testament—is like an official portrait painted by a court painter. It is the work of devout veneration, but not a true likeness. Art and pious imagination have improved on nature. What is therefore needed is to strip away the official portrait of Jesus as a wonder-working divine being in human form and get back to Jesus as he must have been—Jesus as simply a man [p. 81].

He traces the “quest” from Reimarus through Schweitzer (pp. 82–90) and points out that this critical preoccupation had its conceptual roots in the Deists

(p. 83). The passing of the baton to the History of Religions School, Neo-orthodoxy, and the contemporary skeptics is very briefly surveyed (pp. 90–93).

In “Where Do We Go From Here?” (pp. 93–94), Brown acknowledges the frustration of this theological heritage coming from such a long string of skeptics, but he admirably warns the reader not to capitulate for the sake of gaining ‘scholarly’ credibility (p. 93). He closes the seemingly depressing discussion with a promise to provide the reader an assuring option in the subsequent chapters (i.e., 8–11).

Brown introduces his option in chap. 8, “Unscrambling the Puzzle.”

Take the claim that is sometimes made: “Miracles prove the divinity of Christ.” A variant of this is the claim: “Jesus was able to do miracles because he was the divine Son of God.” We feel that we ought to be able to justify these claims by proof-texting them from the New Testament. But when we actually look at the New Testament, the picture there turns out to be more complex. Some of it may appear at first sight to be downright disconcerting. What we need to avoid is reading our own meanings into the New Testament and then, in turn, trying to justify our meanings from the New Testament. What we need to do is to start with the New Testament and follow its lead [p. 96].

Beginning with “two examples of early preaching” (i.e., Acts 2:22 and 10:36–38), Brown makes the point that they “do not move directly from the miracles of Jesus to his divinity” (p. 97). His thesis is that “we need to see both the miracles of Jesus and the question of his person in the context of the Trinity” (p. 98). Quite obviously, one of the author’s motivations is to expose the traditional evidentialist approach.

Brown launches into a discussion of the significance of the titles of Jesus (pp. 98–101). Several of his specific exegetical conclusions should be challenged (e.g., his conclusion concerning the title “Son of God”; cf. pp. 98–99); however, most of his generalizations are acceptable. For example, he correctly observes that “it is an oversimplification to say that ‘Son of God’ expresses Jesus’ divinity and ‘Son of Man’ expresses his humanity” (p. 99).

“Miracles and Truth Claims” is an important section dealing with “the place of miracles in Christian apologetics and the part they play in the truth claims that are made for the Christian faith” (p. 101). Brown emphasizes the attestation factor of Jesus’ miracles. He also argues that the miracle stories do not have the same compelling, evidential force for us today as did the original signs in their context (pp. 102–3), raising two questions: 1) in the light of natural man’s fallenness, were these miracles designed to be directly and immediately compelling? and 2) by drawing such a sharp dichotomy between the then and now has the author not undermined the attestation factor of Scripture?

Brown next points out the shortcomings of appealing to the resurrection of Jesus for the apologetical purposes of arguing from the greater to the lesser miracles and also arguing that the resurrection proved Jesus’ divinity (pp. 104–7). Yet he interjects his own contention that “the resurrection of Jesus is the one necessary explanation of the existence of the Christian church and its faith” (p. 106), thereby espousing verificationism.

Chap. 8 closes with the introduction of Brown’s major subthesis, upon which subsequent discussions will be built:

One part of the picture still needs some unscrambling. It has to do with the difference between a sign and a proof. Signs and proofs are not the same thing. . . . This last point applies to the miracles of Jesus as "signs" no less than road signs. As we saw in the last chapter, one of the characteristic biblical words for a miracle was the word "sign." But in the Bible miraculous signs do not have a purely external function. They do not function like an external proof or guarantee that what is being said has the divine stamp of approval on it. The signs themselves are actually part of the message. . . . They were not external to the message but the embodiment of it. In the same way baptism and the Lord's supper are to be seen in the tradition of prophetic signs.

It is in this tradition—or, to use the expression that we have earlier used, this *frame of reference*—that we can best appreciate the miracle stories of the Gospels. The miracle stories do not function as external proofs of the truth of the message. They are part of the message itself. They are an embodiment of the message. They are like acted parables. They have a story to tell. They confront us as signs that point beyond themselves to the one who performs them. To read them correctly, we need to understand the sign language to which they belong [pp. 107–9].

His subthesis stimulates both interest and concern.

In "Remaking the Puzzle" (chaps. 9–11) the author turns his attention to the four gospels. Preliminarily, he vies for an inaugurated eschatology (pp. 111–15) and continues to argue that Deuteronomy 13, 17, and 18 are exclusively determinative for an understanding of the religious leaders' reactions to Jesus' miracles. There is a shaky embarkation into the gospel data as the author challenges the perspicuous interpretation of "a voice from heaven" (p. 118). This is followed by Brown's forcing of his messianic interpretation of the baptism with the Holy Spirit (cf. his "Spirit Christology," p. 121) upon the account of Mark 1:21–27:

Mark presents a contrast between the two spirits: the unclean spirit in the man and the Holy Spirit who has descended upon Jesus and who now leads him. In Jesus' action of driving out the unclean spirit Mark intends us to see how Jesus was now beginning to fulfill John the Baptist's prophecy. It is the first instance of baptizing with the Holy Spirit [p. 119; cf. pp. 127, 133 for Brown's tenacious and often far-fetched application of this assumption].

Furthermore, he once again leaves with the reader the clear but errant impression that the Pharisees were merely applying OT theology when they reacted to Jesus' miracles as they did:

The event leads to the decision of the Pharisees to destroy Jesus. Mark's account brings out the ironic contrast between Jesus' action by which the man's hand was "restored" and the Pharisees' action in taking counsel how to "destroy" Jesus. What prompted the action of the Pharisees, who enjoyed a reputation for their piety and devotion? The reason is to be found in the explanation we have given. They saw Jesus as an evildoer, a blasphemer who was flagrantly undermining the law and leading the people astray with his signs, wonders, and false teaching. The only course open for them was to follow the instructions of Deuteronomy 13 concerning such matters and purge the evil out of their midst [p. 120].

Brown makes a transition when he says, "Alongside this explicit Spirit Christology, Mark presents an implicit Word Christology" (p. 121). His argument would be more palatable if the referents bound to "explicit" and

"implicit" had been reversed. Nevertheless, Brown rightly stresses that "Mark's Spirit Christology is inextricably linked with a Word Christology" (p. 122). Many of the alleged parallels made by Brown in his ensuing discussion are forced or at least significantly stretched (pp. 122-30).

Chap. 10 ("The Pictures of Matthew, Luke, and John") is designed to be step two in Brown's process of "Remaking the Puzzle." Herein the author restricts his data analysis even more and is thereby open to the criticism he has directed towards others, speaking in generalities. This makes it quite convenient for him to interpret the scriptural data through the two lenses that he has prescribed: "These two factors [i.e., "Spirit Christology" and the leaders' reactions allegedly based upon Deuteronomy 13] are keys to understanding what is going on not only in Mark but also in Matthew, Luke, and John" (p. 131). Nevertheless, some of his generalizations are valid.

A brief survey of Luke (pp. 140-44) is followed by an unjustifiably abbreviated scanning of John's Gospel (pp. 144-50). Certainly the fourth gospel's contribution to the understanding of miracles deserves more than a six-page treatment (e.g., cf. his superficial treatment of John 10:22ff. on p. 147). In addition, most of the author's efforts are directed towards the alignment of selected data with his previously mentioned "key factors." However, Brown does remind the reader that "John develops the theme that the works of Jesus can be recognized as the works of the Father" (p. 147). The author also correctly emphasizes the fact that Jesus' "miracles . . . had the character of prophetic signs" (p. 148), but he does not mention the apologetical controversy that this fact generates. More objectionable is the fact that only one short paragraph deals with Jesus' miracles and the reciprocal responses of belief and unbelief (pp. 149-50). Even though this volume is a survey work aimed at a general audience, its cursory treatment of the miracles in John is unjustified.

In chap. 11 ("Step 3: The Emerging Picture") are found both condemnable and commendable remarks. For example, Brown's discussions relating to the coin in the fish's mouth, the water turned into wine, and the Gerasene swine indicate that he feels compelled to descandalize some of the most academically embarrassing miracle accounts (cf. pp. 153-56). On the other hand, his presuppositional acknowledgment of the Christian's "frame of reference" is commendable (cf. p. 158).

Brown offers a generally credible summary of "Healing and Faith" (pp. 167-68). In answering the question "How are people expected to tell the true from the false?" the author notes appropriately that "all true miracles are 'in character.' They are in character with the work and words of God, as we know them from other parts of God's revelation" (p. 169). The author then states that "the miracles of Jesus were not all-purpose miracles that simply impressed people by their sheer supernatural power. They were miracles that fulfilled prophecy. The evangelists saw in Jesus the fulfillment of Isaiah 35:5-6" (p. 170; cf. pp. 170-71).

The chapter closes with an expected return to the author's Deuteronomy 13 construct in application to the messianic secret (pp. 171-72) and with an equally anticipated emphasis upon his "Spirit" and "Word" Christology (pp. 172-75). Labored applications are again evident.

The discussion takes a contemporary turn in Part III: "Can We Expect Miracles Today?" Chap. 12 ("Health and Wealth for All?") examines the "bewildering smorgasbord of competing claims" in reference to the controversial issue of healing (p. 180). The discussion is organized into two basic categories: 1) "The Appeal To Experience" (pp. 181–90), and 2) "The Theological Arguments" (pp. 190–203). Brown expresses adequate cautions concerning appeals to experience (cf. pp. 185, 88, 90). In reference to the theological arguments he begins by not accepting the longer ending of Mark (pp. 191–92); therefore, he concludes: "In short, the church has no specific ongoing mandate from Jesus to heal that is recorded in authentic Scripture" (p. 192). There is a pointed discussion on "The experience of the Apostles" (pp. 192–95), in which Brown aptly develops the "paradox" of the afflicted miracle worker (pp. 194–95). Some of his least ambivalent conclusions occur in this context:

The account Paul presents here of his experience (to which may be added the picture that we get from Acts and letters like Philippians) clearly gives the lie to the belief that the Christian life is one continuous success story. . . . It is worth noting the miraculous healing was by no means the norm in the New Testament [pp. 194–95].

Concerning James 5:13–16, Brown unfortunately leans toward the early church's application of the passage to the practice of anointing the dying (pp. 195–97). In a subsequent discussion on "Healing and the Incarnation" he rightly reminds all that "there is nothing to suggest that because Jesus and Paul did miracles, the same gift is passed on to all members of the church" (pp. 197–98). Also commendable are his answers to those who argue for the continuance of sign miracles based upon a narrow interpretation of John 14:12–14 (pp. 198–99). Equally satisfying are his brief treatments of "Healing and the Atonement" (p. 200) and "Salvation and Wholeness" (pp. 201–3). He expands the latter discussion in the concluding section of the chapter ("Dangers of Expecting Covenanted Healing," pp. 203–5). This portion contains the most important exhortation of the whole volume as Brown's climactic summary indicates:

Perfect health and healing are not things that we have any right to expect just because we are Christians. They are not guaranteed to us as our birthright any more than total and instantaneous sanctification. Nor has anyone the right to hold out promises of them to people if only they will believe [p. 205].

"My Grace Is Sufficient" (chap. 13) bolsters the author's previous warnings and pleas. The author also reiterates and summarizes his previous conclusions:

My reflections on experience and my study of the New Testament suggest to me that the miracles that we read about in the New Testament were bound up with the manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God and his decisive work in salvation history. But they are not typical ongoing events. The signs and wonders belong to God's special saving acts, but they are not everyday occurrences. There is no specific mention of healing in the ongoing mandate of Christ to the church. There is no unqualified promise of physical health and healing to those who believe, any more than there is an unqualified promise of wealth and prosperity [pp. 208–9].

Following up he also notes that "this is not to say that one should not pray for healing. Nor is it to say that one may pray for anything but healing!" (p. 209). He again deserves commendation for repudiating the common tactics of faith healers:

We cannot go on to draw the conclusion that only our lack of faith prevents us from being healed. Few things are more cruel than to say to someone who is crippled with pain or terminally ill that it is only his or her lack of faith that prevents healing. . . . It is simplistic and dangerous to take biblical texts out of context and use them as pretexts for justifying our practices. . . . It is wrong-headed to take prophecies like Isaiah 42:1-3 and 61:1-2, which applied specifically to Jesus, and to apply them to ourselves and our ministries [pp. 210-11].

In addition, "Nothing in the New Testament suggests that all physical illness is attributable to demonic activity," nor do we find "any warrant in the New Testament for cursing particular diseases" (p. 212). He also strongly rejects the wholesale equation of mental illness and demon possession (pp. 212-14).

Because of the author's firm conclusions on these crucial issues he anticipates and answers those who would accuse him of espousing "a semi-secularized view of the world" (pp. 214-16). Brown's major conclusion pertaining to apologetical methodology is manifested when he again asserts that Jesus' ministry of healing and exorcism "was not designed to soften people up for accepting his message. It was not a kind of bargaining chip that he used to entice people" (p. 216). The volume comes to rest in a homily on Paul's thorn in the flesh which stresses the pre-eminent lesson for all Christians: "My grace is sufficient"!

This new work by Brown on miracles does meet a need. Parts I and III are particularly suitable to a general lay audience. Minimal cautions need to be attached to them. Although Part II contains many valuable insights, it could confuse and/or mislead the reader for reasons previously mentioned. Due to the combination of its brevity and its postulation of some unique interpretations, it is advised that the reader of that portion be a solidly foundationed Berean. On the other hand, the same portion provides for the exegete/theologian a convenient summary (in comparison with *Miracles and the Critical Mind*) of Brown's contributions to the ongoing discussion concerning miracles.

BOOK REVIEWS

When the Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem, by Richard J. Mouw. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. 77. \$3.95. Paper.

Mouw is Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College, Grand Rapids. Because of the differences that exist among Christians on the subject of cultural participation, Mouw has attempted to elucidate the relationship between Christ and culture and the Christian's role in society. Mouw would identify himself with those who long for the "transformation of culture." Isaiah 60, Revelation 21-22, and Heb 13:13-16 primarily form the basis for Mouw's discussion. This is not a technical treatise, but is more of a Bible study with sermon-like insertions. Mouw does not allude to background materials regarding the genre, date, or authorship of Isaiah or Revelation. He presupposes that Isaiah is a unified book and uses "Isaiah" to designate the author (pp. xii-xiii).

In the Introduction Mouw makes a rather startling statement that "biblical visions of the future are given to us so that we may have the kind of hope that issues forth into lives of active disobedience in the context of contemporary culture" (p. xv). Then he explains that his use of the term "culture" applies to the broad patterns of social life, including political, economic, technological, artistic, familial, and educational patterns. Later he summarizes his position when he asserts that human culture will someday be transformed. Then he asks,

Does this mean, then, that we must begin that process of transformation here and now? Are we as Christians called to transform culture in the present age? Not, I think, in any grandiose or triumphalistic manner. We are called to *await* the coming transformation. But we should wait actively, not passively. We must *seek* the City which is to come [p. 75].

Several activities are proper to this "seeking" life. For example, human institutions should be called to obey the Creator, and programs of racial justice should be proposed.

Several problems can be pointed out in Mouw's understanding of Isaiah 60. In chap. 1 Mouw says that the cultural patterns of the eternal City will be more like our present cultural patterns than is usually acknowledged. He says that Isaiah pictures the Holy City as a center of commerce with the ships of Tarshish bringing wealth, honor, and glory to the Lord. He believes that this depicts God's sovereignty over culture. However, Isa 60:9 says that the ships are bringing God's people, Israel, back to the land. This will take place before the Millennium, not in the eternal state (cf. Isa 61:6; Hag 2:7).

Chap. 2 centers in a discussion of the identity of the political rulers and the purpose of their being brought into the Holy City. Mouw quickly dispenses with the idea that these are exclusively believing rulers. He links this with the

previous chapter's concept of the gathering in of human cultural endeavors (p. 25). He acknowledges that this raises many questions and states that "it would probably be wrong to speculate too much here" (p. 31). However, too much speculation has already occurred. There is little or no exegetical basis for these views.

In chap. 3 Isa 60:16 is interpreted in the sense of doing away with racial prejudice (p. 41). Doing away with racial prejudice is a worthy endeavor, but this text does not support it. Rather the nations mentioned here will actually sustain Jerusalem.

The final chapter cites Heb 13:14 and explores different proposals concerning life here and now. Mouw rejects the individual emphasis of John Bunyan's classic *The Pilgrim's Progress* as being incomplete and myopic. Yet, he thinks there is some value in Faith's instructions to Christian. Mouw makes some good points from Heb 13:13, 16, but it is hard to tie these thoughts together with Isaiah 60 in any valid manner.

It is this reviewer's conclusion that Mouw has picked the wrong text (Isaiah 60) for a book on social concern. He does not really "deliver the goods" in his interaction with the real issue of Christ and culture. This is one book which could be bypassed on this topic.

STEPHEN R. SCHRADER

LIBERTY BAPTIST COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

Isaiah 1-33, by John D. W. Watts. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word, 1985. Pp. 449. \$19.95.

Isaiah 1-33 is the first volume to appear in a projected two-volume work by John D. W. Watts, OT editor for the Word Biblical Commentary series and Professor of OT Interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The material of the two volumes is divided, somewhat surprisingly, after chap. 33—a logical break in the book's argument according to Watts. This division is in contrast to those who would divide the biblical book into First and Second Isaiah after chap. 39. Watts's division results from his view that the book is an essential unity. The dust jacket states, "Dr. Watts argues convincingly for the unity of Isaiah, not a division that ascribes the book's composition to two or even three Isaiah composers or schools." However, such a statement is misleading since Watts does not view the book as the work of a single author, as the statement leads one to believe.

Watts does not repudiate the generally accepted critical approaches found, for example, in Wildberger's work in the BKAT series—a work to which *Isaiah 1-33* is deeply indebted. The author states that there is no indication that the book ever circulated among the Jews in a form other than the complete work now known as "Isaiah." It was forged into a unified whole by an unknown editor in 435 B.C., a date "which is late enough to include all the historical references in the book within a present or past perspective to the 'author'" (p. xxiv). Watts argues that this "author" has formed a thematic unity out of the various traditions handed down to him.

Watts sees Isaiah as a drama in ten acts which he entitles "The Vision." Chaps. 1-33 contain five acts, chaps. 1-6, 7-14, 15-22, 23-27, and 28-33. Each

act has various scenes and many scenes possess several episodes. I believe this approach is valid for communicative purposes, but Watts does not use this arrangement for pedagogic reasons only. He argues that drama was widely used in Israel during OT times and that the book of Isaiah was regularly presented as drama. While the author is probably correct in stating that drama was a known medium in Israel, it seems untenable to posit that Isaiah was thus presented. The more plausible view is that the book contains Isaiah's oracles from different times and settings which he has subsequently woven into a tapestry.

Watts's introduction to Isaiah needs elaboration at several junctures. The section on textual criticism gives no evaluation of the data. Additionally, one-half page devoted to the NT use of Isaiah is wholly inadequate. The annotated bibliography is also far too short.

The organization of *Isaiah 1-33* follows that of the Word Biblical Commentary series. The bibliography for each passage is followed by the author's translation, notes on the Hebrew text, a discussion of the form, structure, and setting, followed by comments and "explanation." Watts makes the awkward category of explanation into a recapitulation of the passage.

The worth of *Isaiah 1-33* is to be found in three loci. First, the bibliographies of individual passages are helpful. Second, the notes to the Hebrew text are well-done and will be appreciated by those using the original language. Third, the comments are usually helpful and to the point. Unfortunately, Watts is sometimes brief to a fault.

GEORGE L. KLEIN

The Pauline Circle, by F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 100. n.p. Paper.

For students familiar with the works of Oscar Cullman (*The Johannine Circle*, 1975) and R. A. Culpepper (*The Johannine School*, 1975) about the disciples who were believed to have been close associates of John the Apostle, Bruce's work on Paul's associates and friends will come as a pleasant surprise. "Paul attracted friends around him as a magnet attracts iron filings," writes Bruce, noting that there are over seventy people mentioned by name in the NT of whom we would be completely ignorant were it not for their association with Paul. In his investigation of this "Pauline Circle," Bruce rightly focuses on the apostle's closest co-workers—men such as Ananias, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Titus, and Mark, and women such as Priscilla, Lydia, Phoebe, and Persis. Bruce's sources are Paul's own letters as well as the book of Acts, the former being the primary source of information about Paul's friends and associates, the latter being a trustworthy secondary source of knowledge about Paul's circle. Bruce's previous study, *Men and Movements in the Primitive Church* (1979), has prepared him well to undertake this logical sequel.

This volume is successful in what it attempts to do: to survey the biblical evidence behind the men and women who surrounded Paul and influenced the NT church. The author manifests familiarity with contemporary Pauline scholarship and is well-versed in historical writings, from both a religious and secular perspective (where else could one learn that at the installation of

Archbishop Makarios as first President of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, it was announced that he was simultaneously successor to both Barnabas and Sergius Paullus?).

Yet the scope of the book is also its greatest limitation. Bruce has so compressed his material that the reader is left longing for fuller sketches and fewer single-paragraph summaries of issues. By painting with such a broad stroke, Bruce has left teachers of the NT with the task of supplementing his supplementary study with the lively details of illustrations and implications. Why, for example, does Paul appear to belong to the circle of Barnabas (and not vice versa) in the middle chapters of Acts? Why do we have only Paul's side of the story of his protest over the actions of Peter and Barnabas in Gal 2:11-14? What role did Timothy (or Silas) play in the writing of certain of Paul's letters? If it is unfitting that a woman should take the lead in a teaching ministry (as is widely held today among evangelicals), why is Priscilla usually mentioned before her husband Aquila? These and other issues are merely hinted at leaving the reader hungering and thirsting after answers.

Moreover, even when Bruce does attempt to reconstruct the historical situation, he does not always follow it through to its final implications. If, for example, Onesimus is in fact the same bishop of Ephesus mentioned by Ignatius in *To the Ephesians* (2:2), why not cite the text of Ignatius's own words, which are a most beautiful testimony to the change wrought in the life of a man who was touched by the great apostle? Or if the tradition is correct that Mark was the "stumpfingerted one," why not detail the imaginative interpretation of J. A. Robertson (*The Hidden Romance of the New Testament*) as to how this tradition arose in the first place?

But perhaps I am asking too much of a short book. Even though a lot more could have been said—and a lot has happened in Pauline scholarship since Bruce completed his material in 1983—the book contains so many valuable insights that it can be highly recommended. The introductory material on Timothy and Luke is some of the clearest exposition for students available anywhere. The excellent chapter on "Hosts and Hostesses" is an eloquent reminder that the weak and needy apostle was often indebted to a wide variety of people for hospitality and was dependent not only on the grace of God but also on the grace and kindness of others—a salutary reminder that Christians are to be gracious as well as faithful. Yet I must point out in conclusion that the same personality which drew out people's good will and affection often attracted a good number of enemies. Is it too much to hope that Bruce will one day provide us with a book that treats the other side of the coin: those who could not stomach Paul if their lives depended on it?

DAVID ALAN BLACK
GRACE GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Pastoral Epistles, by Gordon H. Clark. Jefferson, Md.: Trinity Foundation, 1983. Pp. 294. \$9.95.

The author, who was Professor of Philosophy at Wheaton College, Butler University, and Covenant College, has written many works on both

theology and philosophy. *The Pastoral Epistles* is his 31st book. Several of these works have been published by the Trinity Foundation, a non-profit organization whose stated purpose is "to counteract the irrationalism of the age and to expose the errors of the teachers of the church." Hence Clark has written both to present what he considers to be true and to reject what he considers to be error. Negative content is considerable, and the reader may feel uncomfortable with the author's caustic style.

Clark begins with a discussion of the authorship of the Pastorals. For someone who has struggled trying to help graduate students understand the nature of higher criticism, I was impressed with the manner in which the author blends the facets of language and theology into a coherent and rational defense of Pauline authorship. He seems to be unaware, however, of the current shift in European thinking on the problem—even among professors in rather liberal universities (Bo Reicke, for example, has long defended the authenticity of the Pastorals). Furthermore, the arguments against authenticity are not as "devoid of logical force" nor are the opponents of Pauline authorship as inclined "to undermine Christianity" as Clark thinks (p. xiv). Higher criticism has brought to light difficulties in NT introduction. Even though it has led some scholars to go beyond the available evidence, Clark's blanket condemnation of all critical thinkers seems to me to go too far.

The bulk of the work is devoted to the exegesis of the three Pastorals. The author has provided his own translation of the text, accompanied by brief (one could say *too* brief) commentary on the text. In two appendices Clark addresses some relevant issues: the ordination of women, and the Presbyterian doctrine of ordination. The former is essentially a rebuttal of Paul Jewett (and a polemic against the institution where Jewett teaches). The latter is a defense of the ordination of men only to the gospel ministry. While I agree with the positions stated by Clark, I again found the author to be overly critical of the views of others, even to the point of using *ad hominem* arguments. There is certainly a place in Christian scholarship for voicing strong opinions, but in my view this place is not in a commentary that purports to be objective and scientific. Whether the author intended it or not, his commentary appeals more to the lust of a lynch mob than to the mind of a truth-seeking readership.

This is not to say that the commentary serves no useful purpose. Its chief value lies in the author's interpretation of the text. Especially satisfying was Clark's facility in handling the Greek text without making it support a previously adopted conclusion. Difficult and obscure passages are often treated with uncommon skill (e.g., the discussion of the "trustworthy sayings" [pp. 21–23], "bodily gymnastics" [pp. 75–79], and "the grace of God that has appeared to all men" [pp. 220–22]). On the other hand, the author's treatment of "the husband of one wife" (pp. 55–56) is superficial, as is his discussion of the cauterized conscience referred to in 1 Tim 4:2 and the expression "the Savior of all men" in 1 Tim 4:10. One could also question Clark's statement that "Paul did not furnish us with a literary style worthy of imitation" (p. 5) in the light of 1 Corinthians 13, Romans 12, Philippians 2, and many other passages. Nor does one see the relevance of a statement such as "The New English Bible merits first place in the department of terrible translations" (p. 18)—regardless of whether the statement is true.

Apart from the salutary points mentioned above, the work suffers from too many weaknesses to be a consistently helpful addition to the pastor's or the scholar's library. I believe that it is misleading to speak, as Clark does, of the love of the truth in terms of Christian rationalism—a rationalism which easily leads to a type of Christian gnosticism, a pride of knowledge, and a condescending attitude toward others. These qualities have little place in Christianity and certainly no place in a commentary on the Scripture.

DAVID ALAN BLACK
GRACE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Hebrews, by Louis H. Evans, Jr. The Communicator's Commentary, Vol. 10. Waco: Word, 1985. Pp. 259. \$15.95. Cloth.

The Communicator's Commentary series, with Lloyd J. Ogilvie as general editor, is designed to provide historical background and textual interpretation, along with contemporary illustrations for each verse or passage. The authors have been chosen because of their demonstrated abilities as gifted communicators. The author of *Hebrews* is Louis H. Evans, Jr., Senior Pastor of National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., who has done postgraduate study on Hebrews at New College, University of Edinburgh, under James Stewart.

Even though this volume does not provide an exhaustive treatment of the text, it does treat the issues of authorship and the original readers. Evans concludes that the author was apparently not Paul (p. 20), and that the book was addressed to Hellenistic Jews who were second generation Christians (p. 25). A fine summary of Jewish principles of interpretation is given, with a discussion of Halakah, Haggadah, Mishnah, Midrash, and Middoth (pp. 25–29). This becomes the basis for some of Evans's explanations. For example, the description of Melchizedek in Hebrews is viewed as a middoth in which a deduction may be drawn from the silence of the passage on a matter (pp. 28, 114).

The presence of only an occasional footnote along with the inclusion of numerous practical illustrations shows the purpose and nature of the work. Occasionally one wishes that the interpretation of problem passages were given more attention, although the desire of a popular communicator to avoid getting lost in technical argument is understandable. In commenting on Heb 2:1–4, the illustration of a boat slipping its moorings is effective, but the author does not explain the theological issue in relation to salvation except to warn against carelessness. The difficult warning passage in Hebrews 6 is dealt with briefly but not satisfactorily.

Evans gives considerable discussion regarding social justice, acknowledging it to be a special interest. What is not so clear is how this subject fits Heb 3:1–6, although presumably it was drawn from the words "faithfulness" and "apostle" in the text (pp. 18ff.).

Much graphic enhancement of the text occurs (e.g., the description of Israel's grumbling over the manna). Some of the more memorable illustrations of the author are the Clydesdale horses (p. 85), nearly missing the boat

(p. 96), building the Evans clan center (p. 90), rest amid the storm in a small plane (pp. 101–2), and blood sacrifice in warfare (pp. 166–67).

This book gives a generally sound interpretation of the text and shows how it can be applied effectively through graphic illustration. It is not intended to be a reference volume for exegetical matters, but it is a fine work to encourage practical application of the text to daily life.

HOMER A. KENT, JR.

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Paul's Literary Style: A Stylistic and Historical Comparison of 2 Corinthians 11:16–12:13, Romans 8:9–39, and Philippians 3:2–4:13, by Aida Besançon Spencer. ETS Monograph Series. Jackson: ETS, 1984. Pp. xii + 338. \$13.95. Paper.

“Does Paul vary the style of his writing to assist communication to different communities?” Aida Besançon Spencer of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary asks this question at the outset of her book (p. 1, cf. p. 5). The remainder of the book outlines and models the major steps of stylistic study. The upshot of it all is an affirmative answer to the original question: “The way in which [Paul] varies his writing style for each audience shows one reason why his writing was, and still is today, powerful” (221). This interdisciplinary work is adapted from Spencer’s Ph.D. dissertation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

For Spencer “stylistics” refers to the science of style, using linguistics as a literary critical tool by which to investigate the aesthetic effects of language (pp. 19, 33). This relatively new discipline has its roots in ancient rhetoric, literary criticism, grammar, philology, and linguistics. It aims to be descriptive instead of prescriptive. While linguistics is concerned with a strictly structural analysis of language, stylistics probes the aesthetic element of language (p. 21). The methodology involved can be summarized in five steps (pp. 27–33):

1. Choosing at least two contextually comparable samples for analysis
2. Initial intuitive response to the texts and judgment of their features
3. Gathering data and objectively describing the language of the texts (stylolinguistics)
4. Relating the data to the author’s rhetorical strategy and its desired effect upon readers (stylobehavioristics)
5. Relating the data of 3 and 4 to the literary context of the text.

Ten separate operations are involved in Spencer’s data-gathering step. These involve sentence changes, the complexity of the writing, adverbs, prepositional reduction, logical diagrams, abstract and concrete nouns, imagery, Leo Spitzer’s philological circle, verb density, and sentence length (pp. 33–64). Spencer believes that the method is eminently suited to augment traditional approaches to NT grammar and exegesis. Traditionally grammarians have merely touched upon style and rhetoric, so further analysis is warranted. The compatibility of stylistics with grammatical studies is illustrated by Spencer’s historical-grammatical analysis of the three main passages she has chosen. The conclusion drawn from 2 Cor 11:16–12:13 is that Paul employed an indirect style due to the unreceptiveness of the Corinthians (pp. 6, 204–5). A more

direct and expressive style is discovered in Phil 3:2-4:13 where Paul communicates with the receptive Philippians (pp. 205-6). Spencer discovers that the complex, impersonal, and abstract style of Rom 8:9-39 is appropriate for Paul's less direct relationship with the believers at Rome (pp. 206-9). Though there are constant characteristics in Paul's writing to all three congregations, there are also "striking differences" (p. 215). These differences are statistically delineated in the various tables of Appendix I (pp. 237-79).

Turning from summary to evaluation, Spencer should be commended for introducing stylistics to NT scholars. This discipline will no doubt complement the more traditional approaches to grammar and exegesis. It should broaden the exegetical perspective and aid in the avoidance of the atomistic and mechanical excesses sometimes associated with traditional grammatical approaches. Additionally, a grasp of intrinsic rhetorical devices should prove invaluable to those concerned with the dynamic communication of the text's contemporary significance. Understanding the warmth and beauty of the text is as much a part of the exegetical process as the verb tenses and noun cases. Sometimes academic exegesis has overlooked these matters. For those who desire further information, Spencer has added a helpful Appendix defining and illustrating rhetorical terms (pp. 280-313). An extensive bibliography is also included (pp. 222-36).

Spencer's work does raise a few questions. First, were the rhetorical categories she utilizes current in the Mediterranean world of Paul's day? Are such categories primarily Hellenistic or Judaistic, or is rhetoric transcultural in nature? Another question relates to the distinction made between style as unconscious and rhetoric as conscious (pp. 26-27). How does this seemingly artificial distinction relate to the concepts *langue* and *parole* used by other linguists? One also wonders about the applicability of the method to other NT authors. How would it work for other NT authors whose materials are much less extensive than Paul's? Finally, a method as complex as Spencer's will tend to turn away some students. To some extent it is inevitably idiosyncratic and subjective, as shown by the strong conclusions drawn from a mere 2-3% difference in the number of passive verbs in the three passages (p. 151). There are also occasions when the connection between the stylistic observation and the resulting interpretation is not clear. A case in point might be the assertion regarding the relationship between adverbs of manner and an impersonal atmosphere (p. 156).

Spencer should be congratulated for her stimulating approach to a neglected area of exegesis. Now it is up to others to refine the method she has outlined.

DAVID L. TURNER
GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY

Hal Lindsey's Prophetic Jigsaw Puzzle: Five Predictions That Failed, by Samuele Bacchiocchi. Berrien Springs: Biblical Perspectives, 1985. Pp. 90. \$2.95. Paper.

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Professor of Church History and Theology at Andrews University, has written this booklet with a twofold aim. First, he

wishes to point out the fundamental error of Hal Lindsey's dispensationalism by showing that five of Lindsey's predictions have not yet occurred and are unlikely to occur in the future. Second, he is concerned that believers understand the true nature and function of biblical prophecy (p. 11). As the argument unfolds, it becomes clear that the first objective occupies roughly three-fourths of the book. Thus the main burden is to refute Lindsey's "sensational but senseless" (p. 10) prophetic interpretation. Such interpretation is candidly labeled as "capricious" (p. 15), "arbitrary" (pp. 55, 58), and "irresponsible" (pp. 58-59). Perhaps Bacchiocchi's Adventist connections have sensitized him to the dangers of prophetic speculation.

The booklet is photographically reproduced from typewritten originals. It is well done, though there are occasional typographical errors (pp. 27, 30, 31, 67, 84, 87, back cover). Though the format is easy to follow, chap. 1 needlessly rehashes the preface and could have been omitted. Similarly, chap. 5 is very brief and could have been used as a conclusion, which is otherwise lacking.

To summarize, the book lists five of Lindsey's errors. These five errors essentially stem from Lindsey's view that the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948 was the budding of the fig tree (Matt 24:32-33). Thus "this generation" (Matt 24:34) is the generation alive in 1948. Given the normal length of a biblical generation as forty years, the Second Coming of Christ to earth should occur around 1988, with a pretribulational rapture occurring around 1981. Of course, such a rapture did not occur and Lindsey's whole approach is thereby discredited, at least in Bacchiocchi's view. This is the dominant theme of the entire book (cf. pp. 21-26, 30, 33-34, 42-44, 52, 57, 66-67, 72).

Though Bacchiocchi is correct that Lindsey's view of Matt 24:32-34 is untenable, his argument suffers from several misconceptions and non sequiturs. First, Lindsey never explicitly sets 1988 as the exact date of the second coming. Second, Bacchiocchi does not properly distance Lindsey's more sensational approach from that of mainline dispensationalism. He admits this distance at one point (p. 16), but often implies that his refutation of Lindsey refutes most dispensationalists (pp. 10, 16, 20-21, 24, 34, 42, 46, 49, 50, 90). Third, he never really focuses attention upon the main tenets of dispensationalism—these are only briefly mentioned (pp. 42-44). Rather, attention is given to an admittedly tenuous interpretation of Matt 24:32-34, which in any event will not cause dispensationalism as a system to stand or fall. Fourth, the dispensationalists to which he prominently and specifically refers are not leading spokesmen for mainline dispensationalism (pp. 21, 24-25, 49; more responsible and credible spokesmen are mentioned mainly in footnotes, as on pp. 27, 38). Fifth, there are some dubious assertions about dispensationalism. For example, it is doubtful that J. N. Darby rejected the unity of the biblical covenants (p. 20). Also, dispensationalists do not normally arrive at the seven year length of the tribulation by adding the 42 months and 1260 days of Rev 11:2-3 (p. 31). It is doubtful that many dispensationalists believe that "what the Scripture says about Israel cannot be applied to the church and vice versa" (p. 43). Similarly, few dispensationalists base their view of the imminence of Christ's return upon recent events in the Middle East (p. 68). Sixth, though the book is generally irenic, there are times when

sarcasm (pp. 66–67) and guilt by association (p. 10) tinge the rhetoric. On this note one wonders about Bacchiocchi's basis for implying that dispensationalists fabricated the bizarre rumors which circulated several years ago regarding shipments of Indiana limestone reportedly being made to Israel for the rebuilding of the temple (p. 50).

I must agree with Bacchiocchi on the imminence of Christ's personal return to the earth (pp. 11, 25). I share his concern that date-setting sensationalism causes Christians to look wrongly for impersonal events rather than for our personal Savior (pp. 16, 68). He also may be correct that Lindsey's "datesetting" was "shaped more by current trends than by the Scripture" (p. 54). However, Bacchiocchi's exposé of Lindsey's sensational elements hardly refutes Lindsey's system, let alone that of more cautious dispensationalists.

All of this points to the need for dispensationalists to refine their system in view of the Bible, not the newspaper. Sensationalism may temporarily please the crowd, but it will ultimately hurt God's people. Here not only dispensationalism but also other schools of prophetic interpretation should take heed.

DAVID L. TURNER

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Controversy: Roots of the Creation-Evolution Conflict, by Donald E. Chittick. Portland: Multnomah, 1984. Pp. 280. \$12.95.

For those who have been looking for an easy-to-read introduction to the labyrinth of creation/evolution controversy written by a competent scientist (Chittick has a Ph.D. in chemistry and 21 years of teaching experience) who knows and believes the Word of God, this book will meet the need. Since 1965, when I first shared with Dr. Chittick in a Bible and Science seminar held at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in Portland, I have learned to appreciate his wisdom and graciousness in handling the issues concerning ultimate origins that divide men so deeply today. It was, therefore, with great anticipation that I began to study his first major published work. I have not been disappointed. The book is aimed at the concerned Christian layman, including senior high and college students who are bewildered by the impressive claims of apparently authoritative evolutionary scientists.

In a remarkably refreshing way, the author exposes the shallow reasoning and false presuppositions of secular scientism on the subject of ultimate origins (pp. 55, 83–84), and boldly sets forth his own faith-commitment to the glorious God who has revealed himself in the Bible (pp. 264, 267). Beginning his Christian experience as a theistic evolutionist, the author soon discovered that such a position "compromised and downgraded Scripture" (p. 95). He found that an honest confession of faith in the truth of the Bible opened doors of opportunity that otherwise might have been closed to him (pp. 99–100).

Chittick lists "six major veils that make it difficult to reconstruct earth history from a creation viewpoint." These are the Fall, the Flood, thousands of intervening years, contemporary cultural conditioning, evolutionary perspectives concerning early man, and the entire system of public education

(pp. 184-92). But these "veils" should not cause the Christian to despair of attaining an adequate and true knowledge of ultimate origins, for "these are the kinds of odds God likes" (p. 190).

The author provides an excellent balance when he urges "a positive attitude toward a teacher who presents views that disagree with biblical teachings," while at the same time strongly rejecting all "pagan ideas" (pp. 257-58). The Christian must also beware of allowing himself to be trapped by dishonest questions. He must follow the example of the Lord Jesus in this matter, and test the true motives of questioners in order that they may be helped toward God's truth (pp. 259-61).

From the perspective of scientific creationism, the author provides some very helpful insights. For example,

the fossil record tells us that we have only a dim representation of life forms today compared to what existed in the past. If a large number of trees existed together in the garden of Eden, that means there must have been a warm, subtropical climate. It is not possible for wide varieties of trees to exist in colder or temperate climates. In subtropical areas, it is not uncommon for several hundred different types of trees to grow within an area of one square mile [p. 193].

Did Adam possess a "primitive" mentality? The fact that he named all the birds and mammals of the world "on the basis of their characteristics implies high mental capability. It is difficult even for one who has studied animals to be able to name from memory all the animals of the United States, let alone the entire world" (p. 201). The fact that Adam's immediate descendants forged and worked in iron and bronze (an alloy of tin and copper) is highly significant (Gen. 4:22), for the chemistry for producing these substances is quite sophisticated, indicating that early man had developed "a fairly sophisticated technology" (p. 203).

And what about scientific perspectives on the Genesis Flood?

It is largely by ignoring the Flood that geological uniformitarianism has so drastically missed the mark with respect to the age of the earth and other details. It has caused evolutionary thinking to miss the chemistry behind coal and oil formation. It has also caused evolutionary thinking to make the highly questionable assumption that isotopes are a time index. Wrong assumptions about rate processes associated with earth history in geochemical events such as petrification or erosion are also directly traceable to evolutionary assumptions [p. 243].

These statements are characteristic of Chittick's helpful insights. Compare his remarks on huge ripple marks (p. 217, 233), Carbon 14 dating (p. 233), the age of moon rocks (p. 237-38), rapid geologic changes at Mount St. Helens (p. 242), fossil coral reefs in Alaska (p. 193), the origin of coal and oil (p. 194), and of limestone formations (p. 215).

Of great value also are the author's quotations from various sources concerning the tension between Darwin and Lord Kelvin (p. 228), and the incredible assertions of prominent evolutionary scientists such as George Wald:

Time is in fact the hero of the plot. The time with which we have to deal is of the order of two billion years. What we regard as impossible on the basis of human experience is meaningless here. Given so much time, the 'impossible' becomes

possible, the possible probable, and the probable virtually certain. One has only to wait: time itself performs the miracles [pp. 229–30; cf. pp. 31, 229].

With regard to the overwhelmingly obvious fact that the complexities of the universe demand a Designer (cf. Ps 19:1–3; Rom 1:18–20), the author provides a shocking quotation from another evolutionist, Gideon Louw:

The term “strategy” has become common currency among biologists of various persuasions. . . . [But] it is philosophically grossly misleading, as it implies that a process has occurred which is the very antithesis of the evolutionary concept of chance and necessity. Let us, therefore, agree on the strategy to expunge this nasty little word from our biological vocabulary [pp. 85–86].

Similarly, George Gaylord Simpson concluded that evolution “achieves the aspect of purpose without the intervention of a purposer, and has produced a vast plan without the action of a planner” (p. 71).

On the vital question of the ultimate origin of the universe, astronomer Robert Jastrow is quoted as saying: “Theologians generally are delighted with the proof that the universe had a beginning, but astronomers are curiously upset” (p. 144). The reason is not hard to discover: an absolute beginning demands the creative power of God.

Vivid illustrations that will help the layman to grasp otherwise esoteric concepts are found throughout the book: “The Mechanic, the Clockmaker and the Petstore owner” (pp. 39–42); infinite regression mirrors (p. 78); a boat on a lake (p. 138); and a book standing on end (p. 197).

A professional scientist, Chittick proves to be a competent biblical theologian also. For example, he gives a theological reason for the sun being created after the earth and even after life (p. 151). He shows why neither the Bible nor an encyclopedia should be classed as “textbooks of science,” but points out that this does not necessarily make their statements scientifically questionable (pp. 126–27). Also, there are helpful discussions of the historicity of Genesis 1–11 (pp. 127–28); the “religion” of scientism (pp. 54–55); man’s willful rejection of the Creator (pp. 86–90); the failure and danger of theistic evolution (pp. 88, 94–98, 102–3); and the “slippery slope” of compromise positions on Genesis (pp. 110–16).

There are many volumes written by creationists that are more technical and profound, but it would be difficult to find a book that is more readable, comprehensive, and helpful on an introductory level. I highly commend this book to the Christian world.

JOHN C. WHITCOMB
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Doctrine of Salvation, by Charles M. Horne. Revised Edition. Chicago: Moody, 1984. Pp. 112. \$4.95. Paper.

Moody Press has reissued Charles Horne’s fine book on the basic issues of soteriology. The book was originally published in 1971 and has been revised by Paul Nevin of Moody Bible Institute with a new Foreword by

John Armstrong. Horne served for years as Professor of Theology at Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College. He received his college training at Grace College and his seminary training at Grace Theological Seminary.

The value of the book is found not so much in its content (although Horne's discussions are very useful), but in the charts, bibliographies, and the scripture index. The bibliographies direct the reader to various points of view on each topic for further study and comparison with the conclusions offered by Horne. As is noted in the Introduction, "We frequently learn the most from those who differ from us. With proper guidance such reading can promote the cultivation of a constructive critical sense, a much needed tool in the learning process."

The book begins with a survey of the biblical material on humanity's sinfulness, including a brief comment on the transmission of sin. Chap. 2 is an outstanding model of theological method. In ten pages, Horne discusses the biblical material concerning election (see especially his comments on Eph 1:4-14 and Romans 8) and surveys the Arminian, Calvinistic, Barthian, Existential, and Salvation History schools of thought. Horne's ability to analyze various positions succinctly is best shown in the section on the theories of the atonement where he surveys the strengths and weaknesses of Abelard, Socinius, Origen, Grotius, Aulen, and Calvin. He opts for Calvin's view of the substitutionary atonement, but recognizes that some of the other options do have strengths and some biblical support. The question concerning the extent of the atonement is analyzed and Horne apparently leans toward a particular redemption.

There are helpful chapters dealing with application and results of salvation. The chapters in which he discusses the assurance of salvation and the climax of salvation are extremely beneficial and quite pastoral in nature. The book concludes with appendices on the legitimacy of developing an *ordo salutis* and on the struggle of the believer in salvation (which includes a brief exegesis of Rom 7:14-25).

This small book contains a wealth of information for the pastor or beginning student. It is a summary of Horne's notes from his many years of treating this subject in the classroom. It could function as a supplementary college textbook, but I would imagine that the book could best be used by pastors attempting to instruct their congregations in the doctrine of salvation.

DAVID S. DOCKERY
CRISWELL CENTER FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

Liberation Theology, ed. Ronald Nash. Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1984. Pp. viii + 260. \$15.95.

Liberation Theology, by Emilio A. Nuñez; trans. Paul E. Sywulka. Chicago: Moody, 1986. Pp. 302. \$15.95.

Liberation Theology is the most widespread theological movement of our time. *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines have given overviews of this movement which finds its largest following among Roman Catholics. There are numerous

overviews and summaries of the movement, but until the recent critique by J. A. Kirk (*Theology Encounters Revolution* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1980]), there was a lack of serious, systematic analysis. Now, in addition, we have the series of essays edited by Nash and the volume by Emilio Nuñez, a third world theologian who knows the movement from within.

The list of contributors to Nash's volume reads like a Who's Who in theology. It includes Harold O. J. Brown, Carl F. H. Henry, Clark Pinnock, R. C. Walton, Duke Vree, Richard John Neuhaus, and, of course, Nash.

The essay by Brown, who sees Liberation Theology as a hermeneutical issue, is worth the purchase of the book. Brown acknowledges that liberation is found in the biblical concepts of redemption and salvation. Jesus came to set captives free (Luke 4:18). The issue is whether the motif of deliverance has primary reference to spiritual deliverance from sin or to political and economic deliverance from oppression. I believe that Brown has rightly analyzed the root of Liberation Theology as political (Marxist), not biblical. Liberation Theology has so contextualized and interpreted the gospel of redemption that its Marxist framework has overshadowed the true gospel.

Michael Novak and Ronald Nash reject the concept that capitalism is responsible for poverty in the third world. Nash pleads for Christians to adopt capitalism over socialism or Marxism. He warns that: 1) true spiritual freedom is impossible without economic freedom; 2) right behavior is strengthened as owners treat private property as a trust; 3) sanctity of contract strengthens character; and 4) the work ethic teaches us that everything has a cost.

The most interesting essay is Pinnock's autobiographical account, "Pilgrimage in Political Theology." He traces his own steps from alignment with the new left in the early 1970s to a mediating approach that rejects political extremes of right or left. Edward Norman examines the social and political understandings of Christianity in the third world. Walton evaluates J. Moltmann's political theology (which in many ways is foundational to the Liberation Theology movement). Henry's chapter on the weaknesses of Marxist ideals is meticulous and well-informed. He sees Marxism as a poor substitute for Christianity and shows how the Marxist presuppositions of Liberation Theology drown the historical revelation of God in the historical situation of the oppressed. The essays by Vree and Neuhaus are critiques of G. Gutierrez, the movement's leading theologian. At the end of the volume is Nash's summary. He concludes that Liberation Theology comes up short in its faithfulness to biblical Christianity.

The volume by Nuñez is perhaps the most thorough evangelical critique of Liberation Theology to date. Nuñez teaches at the Central American Theological Seminary in Guatemala and is an active member of the theological commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship and the Lausanne Committee. The author is a native of El Salvador and received his training at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Nuñez observes that for most Latin American theologians (contra North American or European theologians), theology is more than an academic classroom exercise. Rather, theology is action that brings about liberation. It is Nuñez's conviction that, unlike the "God is dead" movement twenty years prior, Liberation Theology is no mere fad in the theological world.

Núñez understands the plight of the Church in Latin America. He identifies with the frustration of the masses and will not tolerate a spiritual-need/social-need dichotomy. He points out that Liberation Theology, which in many ways is more sociological than theological, arose in the context of the church's neglect of the poor and the oppressed. The movement rightly speaks to the matter of injustice in a manner similar to the prophet Amos. But has the movement understood God's voice to the people today? Núñez does not shy away from this tough question.

Núñez provides an overview of the historical and social context of Latin America. He then traces the development of Liberation Theology from the European influence on its roots through the Roman Catholic shapers to its current state. In so doing, he brings to the forefront the philosophical, social, economic, and ecclesiastical factors that have brought about a new way of "doing theology."

He gives detailed observations and analyses of the primary themes in Liberation Theology: 1) salvation; 2) Jesus as liberator; and 3) the church as context for liberation. He concludes with an agenda for doing evangelical theology within the third world context. The book concentrates on Latin American theology, although Liberation Theology has African, Asian, Black, and Feminist faces as well.

This book should be required reading for all missionaries, missiologists, and theologians. No evangelical college or seminary student dares neglect the importance of this book.

Together both books provide penetrating analysis of the most influential theology of our day. I am quite sure that the work by Núñez will be a standard resource for years to come. The North American Christian community, it is hoped, will hear, understand, and act in a way to bring the true message of the gospel with its spiritual and social implications to a dying and lost world.

DAVID S. DOCKERY
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The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism, edited by Leland Harder. Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1985. Pp. 816. \$69.00.

This work, a documentary history, is not only a mine of valuable information but is also an excellent model for books of this genre. Utilizing letters of Conrad Grebel (ca. 1498–1526) as a basis for the story, Herder skillfully conducts the reader on a tour through important materials—many unavailable in English translation elsewhere—pertaining to the origin and development of the Anabaptist spirit and movement in and around Zurich. Though the once popular thesis that the Anabaptist movement finds its origin in the events in Zurich has been challenged in recent studies, the importance of Swiss Anabaptism and early promoters such as Grebel, Felix Mantz, Jörg Blaurock and associates remains undiminished.

The account of Grebel and Swiss Anabaptism is presented by Herder as a drama in five acts plus prologue and epilogue. A cast of characters numbering one hundred and six is named at the outset. More than one hundred and fifty

pages are given at the end of the story to profiles of these individuals, presenting important information about each person and his or her place in the history of Anabaptism. These character sketches, which include references to where individuals are mentioned in the documents of the book, are a valuable resource not only in the reading of this work but also as a biographical dictionary to be used alongside other studies of Anabaptism.

The first three acts are concerned with the young Grebel as a student, prodigal, and seeker. One becomes acquainted with the melancholy and troubled humanist as he struggles through his university experiences. Some of these experiences were beneficial. Many of his activities caused him difficulty with his family as well as bringing upon him emotional upset and physical illness. One travels the bumpy roads of Grebel's youth amazed that he would become a catalyst of a vital Christian movement and then be dead of the plague within a ten year span of time. At times the reading of the letters written during this period becomes tedious but these materials give needed insight into the man Grebel and his search for truth and meaning.

After having discussed Grebel's life from 1517 into 1522, Herder focuses attention on Grebel as the advocate of reform. Grebel's support of Zwingli in the work of reformation in Zurich is presented not only in Grebel's words but also in those of other chroniclers of the period. Here the artistry of Herder is demonstrated as he brings together in an engaging arrangement a variety of testimonies regarding reform in Zurich. The documents present the picture of a reform that was not to see an extended period of unity. Certain students and followers of Zwingli broke from him over the matter of the completeness of the reform and its timetable. Grebel advances from the position of advocate to ringleader of the party calling for radical and rapid reform. Such a call led the new party into conflict not only with Roman Catholics but also with Zwingli and his reform movement. Grebel and his associates were not willing to wait patiently with Zwingli for the Zurich council to enact reform measures gradually in order that the least resistance might be raised. At this time, also, the question of the propriety of infant baptism became an issue and a source of division in Zurich. Zwingli championed the pedobaptist cause with the backing of the council. Extensive excerpts from material by Zwingli and decrees by the Zurich leaders are presented as well as writings of those opposed to having children baptized. The antagonism produced by disputations over this matter gave birth to much invective. The story takes on the nature of tragedy.

As early as 1523, Grebel had written, out of frustration with Zwingli's hesitancy in completing the reform, "Whoever thinks, believes or declares that Zwingli acts according to the duty of a shepherd thinks, believes, and declares wickedly" (p. 276). Following the historically significant meeting of January 21, 1525, in which Grebel, Mantz, Blaurock and others were rebaptized (bringing upon themselves the wrath of the Zurich leaders), Grebel wrote of the "bloody faction of Zwingli" (p. 379), of Zwingli and others withholding "the truth in falsehood" (p. 380), and of Zwingli as one "who is himself going into captivity according to the Apocalypse" (p. 357). Not to be outdone, Zwingli refers to the "rebels" who disrupt Christian unity and describes them as ones who "daily bring forth more silly arguments than Africa produces strange beasts," who "sit in judgment and condemn everybody" and "when they have

finished . . . pour such bitterness upon one another that one could bathe in the abundance of gall" (p. 317).

It is a blot on the record of the Reformation that capital punishment was exercised against some who dissented from the decrees of the Zurich council concerning baptism. It is with sadness that one reads the accounts of suffering and the defenses for such persecution, including the burning and drowning of Anabaptists. An example is the following account:

On Saturday, January 5, 1527, the Large and Small Councils of Zurich condemned to death Feliz Mantz, the son of Hans Mantz, the canon. And so he was drowned in the afternoon of the same day, about three o'clock, and [they] beat his comrade, Jörg Blaurock, out of the city with rods on the very same day at about four. For Mantz had baptized persons in violation of the prohibition on penalty of death by drowning, and Blaurock had also returned to Milords' jurisdiction against their strict prohibition" [pp. 474-75].

Grebel escaped imprisonment only to die, apparently of the plague, soon thereafter. However, the movement of which he had been a ringleader expanded numerically and geographically. Zwingli referred to the deceased Grebel as the Anabaptists' "head in hell" (p. 487). Even in death, Grebel continued to be an object of vilification. Herder continues to document events subsequent to the death of Grebel, giving to the reader glimpses of further disputes, martyrdoms, and critiques of the Anabaptists.

The text of the drama unfolded by Herder makes up the major portion of the book but mention must be made of the almost two hundred pages of footnotes which explain certain translations, impart historical background information, refer the reader to other documents where similar or complementary material is presented, and which interact with textual problems and the interpretations of other historians. The introductions to the various documents are helpful, as is the bibliography. Scripture and general indexes are included.

This work is the fourth volume of the Classics of the Radical Reformation and enhances the value of an already excellent series. It is regrettable that the anticipated limited circulation of this book has resulted in a high price affixed by the publisher. This series is more of a ministry than a profit-maker and Herald Press is to be congratulated on its commitment to making such valuable material available to the English-speaking church, especially to those independent bodies which owe so much to the Anabaptist movement.

RONALD T. CLUTTER
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Lefevre, Pioneer of Ecclesiastical Renewal in France, by Phillip Edgcumbe Hughes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. Pp. xiv + 210. \$15.95. Paper.

As he did in *The Theology of the English Reformers* (1965) and in his editing of *The Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin* (1966), Philip Edgcumbe Hughes once again has demonstrated impressive versatility as a scholar. Hughes, a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary and known chiefly for his excellent commentaries on various books of the NT, is

also a profound researcher and interpreter of Reformation themes. *Lefevre, Pioneer of Ecclesiastical Renewal in France* is the first full scale intellectual biography of this sixteenth century Roman Catholic humanist to appear in the English language, a feat which in itself puts students of the Reformation in debt to the author.

According to Hughes, Lefevre was one of the pivotal figures of the sixteenth century whose principal significance is that he "blazed the trail from Renaissance to Reformation" (p. ix). After lamenting the way in which scholars have neglected Lefevre and allowed him to be overshadowed by Erasmus, Hughes argues that his subject was intellectually superior to Erasmus and actually a seminal forerunner of Luther and the Protestant reformers. In fact, Lefevre appears in this book as a proto-Protestant who embraced the distinctives of *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*. By means of extensive quotations from Lefevre (translated into English for the first time) Hughes portrays Lefevre as one who contended for the very doctrines which comprised the heart of Luther's soteriology. In other words, Lefevre was not a mere critic of ecclesiastical corruption, clerical ignorance, and scholastic sophistry, but a theological reformer committed to the restoration of the NT teaching about salvation.

Although Hughes has documented his work massively from primary sources, his interpretation of this French humanist/reformer is not entirely convincing, even though the author has shown numerous parallels and similarities between Lefevre and Luther. On the matter of justification the real question is not whether Lefevre believed in *sola fide* / 'faith alone', but how he understood the *nature* of justification. That is, did he see it as a forensic, declaratory act of God by which a sinner is reckoned righteous on the basis of Christ's merits alone, or did he regard it as an ongoing process not to be distinguished from sanctification? St. Augustine taught the latter view, and it is possible, perhaps even likely, that Lefevre believed that way too. The one place in this book where the author provides important evidence that the French reformer might not have been an Augustinian on this point pertains to the matter of perseverance in the faith. Hughes has shown that Lefevre believed one could enjoy the assurance of salvation, which would not be possible within the traditional Augustinian conception of justification. Hughes could be right about Lefevre's position, but it would be well to cite more evidence to buttress his conclusion. As the matter stands this reader remains willing to be persuaded.

The publisher's description of this work promotes it as a book for the general reader, but this is not so. It is the work of a fine scholar who has written for other scholars, and a person uninitiated into the intricacies of Reformation literature would find this book bewildering. For informed readers it is, however, a work of fresh investigation which should stimulate considerable interest in the subject. The careful documentation and well selected bibliography make it a valuable tool for those who seek to study further the life of Lefevre and the relationship of Roman Catholic humanism to the Protestant Reformation. This book belongs in every personal or institutional library with strong Reformation holdings.

JAMES EDWARD MCGOLDRICK
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

The Apostolic Church, By Everett F. Harrison. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 251. n.p. Paper.

Everett Harrison, Emeritus Professor of NT at Fuller Theological Seminary and the author of *Introduction to the New Testament*, has given us a clear and helpful treatment of the apostolic Church. It is a text that deals comprehensively, though not exhaustively, with the major internal and external developments in the early years of the life of the Christian Church. As sources, Harrison includes both the book of Acts and the Epistles of the NT. But the author is sensitive to contemporary religious and secular literature as well.

Harrison begins with a brief description of the essential political and religious characteristics of the culture in which the early Church began. Chap. 1 includes a helpful survey from the era of Alexander the Great to the Bar Cochba revolt. Topics such as hellenization, Roman government, the rule of the Herods, Zealot terrorism, and the First Jewish War receive special attention. Here the reader is treated to several interesting caveats, such as, "Although it is customary to date the outbreak of the Jewish War against Rome at A.D. 66, a virtual state of war existed for years prior to that time" (p. 8). Under the heading "the Religious Background," the author focuses on Greek religion, the Roman Pantheon, the Hermetic writings, and the rise of Caesar worship.

Beginning in chap. 2, Harrison proceeds to survey the book of Acts, the main source of information on the rise and progress of the early Church. The focus is upon the history of critical scholarship concerning the validity and usefulness of Acts as a historical document. Harrison handles capably the special problems of the speeches in Acts and the purpose of Luke's "history" of the Church.

Moving beyond these preliminary matters, Harrison sketches the history of the apostolic Church from its conception at Pentecost to the era of its persecution and beyond. Chap. 3 carefully treats the relationship of Church and State: the Christian, writes Harrison, is to obey but not to absolutize the state (p. 83). I found Harrison's treatment of two issues to be particularly helpful in this chapter: the contention of S. G. F. Brandon (*Jesus and the Zealots*) that Jesus was a zealot or at least a zealot sympathizer; and the Church's attitude toward slavery. The chapter concludes with an interesting remark: "It should be obvious that flight from the world in the interest of removing oneself from the temptations of society is largely fruitless, since the world is not the source of temptation but only an accessory to it" (p. 99). As subsequent Church history has shown, one can be as sorely tempted in a monastery as in the midst of a large metropolis.

Chap. 4 discusses the internal development of the Church, including its organization, theology, creeds, worship, ministry, teaching, and discipline. Finally, in chap. 5 Harrison treats us to brief sketches of the individual churches (Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Rome), each located in the nerve centers of civilization.

When compared with other books dealing with apostolic history, this volume ranks high and should be helpful to students of Acts and (especially) the Pauline Epistles. Scholars who believe in the minute analysis of every single problem may find Harrison's work inadequate. For those teachers who have required Bruce's *New Testament History* in courses on early Christian history,

this book will prove to be too elementary. Nevertheless, Harrison has produced a book that is interesting and valuable in its contribution to the ongoing discussion of the apostolic Church.

DAVID ALAN BLACK
GRACE GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Undivided Self: Bringing Your Whole Life in Line with God's Will, by Earl D. Wilson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1983. Pp. 191. \$5.95. Paper.

The purpose of this book is to promote a balanced view of the Christian life. Wilson embraces the hope that a believer can confront realistically in an integrated, holistic fashion the tensions caused by internal conflicts.

The primary model that is employed in this quest for balance and unity is a triangular design. At the corners of the model are the traditional descriptions of education: "thinking," "feeling," "doing." Inside the middle of this triangle, however, is an added innovative element: "choosing." Since this new element maintains ties with each of the three previous descriptions, three "inner triangles" are constructed, as well. Wilson chose these four components "because we easily recognize them in our daily experience" (p. 19).

The model is designed to encourage balance. Wilson painstakingly explains how each of the four factors in his model equally affects the other three components. However, at times it is difficult to comprehend how this "balance" typifies or represents reality. This critique of Wilson's model is analyzed below.

First, consider Wilson's implementation of his four-part model in two specific "inner" conflicts: "Another step in achieving balance is distinguishing between real and imagined problems. . . . Imagined problems may be caused by exaggerating (catastrophizing) or minimizing the probable consequences of events" (p. 37). The author further explains, "Catastrophizing says, 'It's horrible!' Minimizing says, 'It will go away.' Reality says, 'This is the way it is'" (p. 38).

Wilson utilizes his model to address these two distorted perceptions. However, instead of illustrating how the four factors of thinking, feeling, doing and choosing are to be equally applied (as his model would indicate), Wilson tends to emphasize thinking as the most prominent feature. He concludes by noting that the three views of life (noted in the previous quotation) are comparable to three birds—the magpie is like the catastrophizer ("making a lot of noise everytime a little disturbance occurs"); the ostrich parallels the life of the minimizer ("he buries his head and fails to see things as they are"); the most appropriate perspective of reality is typified by the owl ("the symbol of thought and reality testing," pp. 38–39). Thus, the emphasis is clearly on reason and thought, in contrast to feeling, doing and choosing.

A similar approach is taken in chapter eight, where the subject of controlling emotions surfaces. Without exception, "thinking" is portrayed as the dominant attribute of Wilson's four-part model. The following steps are advised by the author: (1) "Awareness is the first key to bringing any emotion under control" (p. 104); (2) "Review how you might have responded differently" (p. 106); (3) "We need to *understand* the payoff which being angry has" (p. 109); and (4) "Surprisingly, the key to forgiving and being free is *not*

to forget the offense. You may have been ill-used. You need to acknowledge that" (p. 110). The four phrases that I have highlighted above indicate, once again, the dominant role that the cognitive domain plays in Wilson's book.

Now, having made the assessment that "thinking" occupies the most prominent place in Wilson's model (even though his diagram would indicate an equal balance), it should be noted that the author's perspective can, indeed, be verified as a biblical position. Several passages point believers to the prominent imperatives of cognitive responsibility. And Wilson rightly draws our attention to these verses: (1) 2 Cor 10:4-5, "... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (p. 82); (2) Phil 4:8, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble . . . think on these things" (p. 85); and (3) 1 Tim 4:16, "Watch your life and doctrine closely" (p. 140).

The overriding theme of this reviewer's critique can be synthesized this way: if each of the four parts of Wilson's model was individually measured against the other three factors, would there be a "balance" or an "imbalance?" This reviewer is convinced—from Wilson's own arguments, from Scripture, and from personal life-experiences—that the believer's cognitive responsibilities outweigh his affective and behavioral duties. This is *not* to say that one's affective and behavioral responsibilities are unimportant or even that they are not as important as the cognitive issues. What this statement *does* say is that the Word always commences discussion of Christian responsibility with the cognitive domain (either directly or indirectly). There is an "imbalance" in the triangular model, because a Bible verse will never be discovered which subordinates the believer's thoughts to his feelings or behaviors.

Once the reader is aware of this perspective, Wilson's text proves to be a helpful resource for resolving inner, human conflicts. Specifically, *The Undivided Self* provides meaningful illustrations of man's complexity and of the inter-related qualities of his being. Of particular benefit is Wilson's tenth chapter, "Self-Esteem: God Don't Make No Junk." Four personality-types which promote low self-esteem are described as the most common approaches: (1) "Prebake Crumbmakers" (those who say, "Don't expect much of me"); (2) "Divide and Crumble" (individuals who give credit to everyone, never acknowledging God's work through them); (3) "Susie Substitute" (people who exclaim, "Yeah, but you should hear my sister play!"); and (4) "Christian Crumblers"—the most convicting personality of them all!—(those who confess, "It wasn't really me. It was the Lord").

Throughout the book, mention is made of the Apostle Paul's personal struggles, reflected in Romans 7. Wilson purposefully confronts the human tensions reflected there, avoiding the all-too-common interpretive extremes (i.e., on the one hand, accepting and promoting a schizophrenic approach to life; on the other hand, considering the eradication of the sin nature to be normative for the believer).

In summary, *The Undivided Self* represents a refreshing, holistic view of man. In contrast to some so-called holistic texts (which ironically end up dissecting and analyzing only the separate components of man), this book identifies both the "parts" and the "sum of the parts" pertaining to human development.

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